THE

RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF INDIA

THE TRIDENT, THE CRESCENT,

AND

THE CROSS:

A VIEW OF THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF INDIA DURING THE HINDU, BUDDHIST, MOHAMMEDAN, AND CHRISTIAN PERIODS.

BY

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PREFACE.

THIS DAY two years ago did I, after an absence of nineteen years, once more behold the white cliffs and green fields of Old England. That period of banishment was a season of mingled sorrow and joy, but of *more joy* than sorrow. After so many years of missionary toil I brought back with me two decided convictions; these were, that, of all lives the Missionary's life is the most happy, and of all work Mission work is the most important; and I came home resolved, if God should enable me, to illustrate these convictions in a treatise which, by His blessing, might help to convey them to other minds.

The brightness of returning joy was followed by a dark night of unlooked-for trial. This necessarily delayed the execution of my plan; but it seemed no sufficient ground for relinquishing it. It is now completed; and, strange though it may seem, I almost lament that fact. I cannot but look back with a sort of lingering regret to

the solace and delight which, for some months past, the preparation of this work has afforded me. If it be true that 'much study is a weariness to the *flesh*,' it is not less true that it may prove a singular help to the *spirit*.

My aim has been to stir up among thoughtful and intelligent Christians a deeper interest in India by making its religious history better known. Surely nothing within the whole range of history is more profoundly mysterious and more awfully solemn than the religious history of India. To the antiquarian, the philosopher, the metaphysician, this subject presents a rare field for research and study; to an earnest Christian it appeals with special force; in the mind of such an one it awakens sentiments of tender sympathy and thrilling interest; to such an one this history suggests far more than a curious study of ancient superstitions and psychological eccentricities; it reveals to him the struggles of the human mind for thirty centuries to settle momentous questions which the light of Revelation alone can solve; it shows a mighty nation, sprung from the same primeval stock with ourselves, for so many ages 'feeling after God if haply it might find Him;' it shows that same nation, after endless vicissitudes of fruitless search and speculation, providentially brought into the closest alliance with ourselves, and mutely craving the spiritual crumbs which fall from our table.

The enforced delay in the prosecution of my design has not been without its advantages; it has given me more time and increased facilities in preparing materials for the work; amongst these facilities has been the appearance of several valuable treatises of a cognate character. It will be seen with how much thankful boldness I have availed myself of these recent sources of information.[1]

To one book in particular I owe an especial debt of gratitude. When, some eighteen months ago, the distinguished Professor of Sanscrit at Oxford gave me some account of a work which he had then in the press, I rejoiced with hope; but, when the book itself appeared, I found that 'the half had not been told me.' '*Indian Wisdom*' is a contribution of singular value to the many works of learned interest put forth by our modern Sanscrit scholars. I felt that, in citations from the sacred writings of the Hindus, I could not do better than use the simple, terse, and almost literal renderings of Professor Monier Williams. I wish here to state that I have done this in all but some three or four cases which are otherwise accounted for.

[1] Very gratefully would I acknowledge the interest and profit which I have derived from the study of Robson's *Hinduism and its Relations to Christianity*; Talboys Wheeler's *History of India, Mussulman Rule*; and Sherring's *History of Protestant Missions in India.*

God knows it is with no overweening confidence that I send this production into the world; I began it with a trembling sense of my inability for the task, and yet with a hope that I might be helped to accomplish it. How often I have reproached myself with presumption for making the attempt and anticipated failure, I cannot say. The main thought which has given me strength and courage has been the consciousness of a desire to glorify God in this undertaking and to advance His holy cause. May He graciously forgive whatever of a baser kind may have mingled with that higher aspiration!

I think I may say that in everything I have tried to be accurate and honest. I have spared no pains to make sure of those facts which lay beyond my personal knowledge, and in the statement of those facts which pertain to my individual experience, I have striven to tell an unvarnished story, to guard against unconscious exaggeration—no fanciful danger—and rather to say too little than too much.[1]

[1] In passing this work through the press two things have struck me as needing a word of qualification. In a note on page 12 the *ordinary* treatment and condition of a Hindu widow is described. It is but just and right to acknowledge that this is a rule which has many honourable exceptions in the present day; many are the instances in which natural affection either ignores the rule altogether or applies it with softened stringency. A similar remark will apply to the usual penalties inflicted on a respectable Hindu convert (see pp. 33, 37). Such penalties undoubtedly threaten him at the outset, and for a time attend him; but let him only possess his soul in patience, and hold on his way in courage and consistency, and the chances are he will outlive contumely and regain respect.

A word of explanation as to the title of this work may not be altogether superfluous. Many a writer has found it almost a less difficulty to write a book than to find a fitting title; and no title, perhaps, can give other than an imperfect idea of the work itself. In this case, the reader may say, 'I can see the import of the *Crescent* and the *Cross*, but what am I to understand by the *Trident?*' The answer is, the Trident is a three-pronged fork which appears on every Siva temple in India. It doubtless indicates the later Hindu Triad. It has thus come to be regarded as a symbol of the Hindu religion. As Buddhism has no specific symbol to mark it, the *Trident* has to do duty both for Hinduism and for its heretical offshoot; and, as Indian Buddhism ultimately resolved itself into the system from which it had revolted, the one symbol may, perhaps, by a *stretch of charity*, be allowed to cover both systems.

Such as the work is, I commit it to the grace and mercy of God, and to the kindly and candid consideration of the Christian public. So sensible am I of the many defects of my performance that I shall be most thankful for the friendly criticisms of my readers.

Before this year has run its course I shall be on my way back to the glorious land of my adoption; if, in the midst of my toils and cares, tidings of good should reach me—if it should appear that, even in the smallest

degree, this work has helped to deepen the interest of my countrymen in India and provoke them to greater liberality and zeal in the work of its evangelisation, I shall thank God and go on my way rejoicing.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

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CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY HINDUS.

'God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem.'
Gen. ix. 27.

FOUR thousand years ago there dwelt somewhere in the highlands of Central Asia, probably near the sources of the Oxus, the ancestors of those mighty nations which, for enlightenment and prowess, have ever been the most distinguished in the world. Those venerable sires, the descendants of Japheth, contrasting themselves with less favoured branches of the human family, with perhaps equal propriety and pride, called themselves *Arya*, or noble.

Probably not long after the period we speak of, a disposition to wander led large sections of the Aryan family to quit the common homestead. When once the tide of emigration set in, wave rolled upon wave; those who first left the land of their fathers were pushed forward by others who succeeded them. In this way, one section reached and gradually peopled Europe; another settled in Persia; whilst a third made its way to India, and founded the Hindu race. The term India was evidently derived by the Greeks and Romans from the word Hindu, this latter word being formed by the Persians from the name of the

Indus (Sindhu), on the banks of which river the earliest Aryan immigrants established themselves.[1] In process of time the Aryans spread themselves over the rich plains of the Ganges, and thus it came to pass that the whole country between the Punjab and Benares acquired the definition of Hindustan—the dwelling-place of the Hindus.

The primitive settlers appear to have devoted themselves mainly to pastoral pursuits; their chief wealth consisted in their flocks and herds. By and bye they betook themselves to agriculture, and successfully cultivated the smiling provinces which came under their sway. Nor were the higher arts neglected; they built themselves cities, and constructed ships with which they carried on commerce with other lands. For ages after they reached the land of their adoption they could boast no written records; but they possessed all the while a vast store of intellectual wealth, which though inscribed only on the tablet of their memories was ever growing in bulk and richness, and which they orally transmitted to their children's children for many generations.

At length their sages committed these treasures to writing, and thus an immense impetus was given to the literary tendencies of the race; the hymns and mantras which had so long been stored up in their minds were faithfully recorded; their memories freed from this burden, those ancient literati, with new-born vigour, set themselves to think and reason and write. In this way grew up that ponderous and deeply interesting accumulation of Sanscrit lore, which in our day is becoming a novel and delightsome study to thoughtful thousands in Europe.

But the increase of literature was only one of the results of

[1] The term Hindu has therefore, so far as its origin goes, nothing whatever to do with religion. Strictly speaking, any descendant of those primitive Aryan settlers, whatever his religion may be, has a perfect right to call himself a Hindu. As a matter of convenience, however, we shall in this treatise use the word in its popular acceptation, as a religious rather than a national definition.

the discovery of writing; a longing, amounting almost to a passion, for the cultivation of language rapidly developed itself. It is true everywhere that advancement in literature tends to enrich and improve the language used; but generally the latter is only cultivated for the sake of the former; the early Hindus, however, studied language for its own sake; they threw themselves heart and soul into the subject, and stayed not until, as it has been well expressed, 'they had subtilised it into an intricate science, fenced around by a bristling barrier of technicalities.'[1] The consequence of this, as a matter of course, was the formation of a language which was emphatically a learned, and ultimately became a dead language. The lines of separation between that and the colloquial of the unlettered masses grew more and more distinct; the common people still spoke the tongue which they had brought with them from their ancestral home, though modified in some degree by their contact with the aboriginal tribes of India. They had no common property in the intellectual treasures which the Shasters contained; a halo of sacred exclusiveness grew up around those holy books and the language in which they were written; the hallowed Sanscrit page was only to be scanned by sacred eyes; the pundits and the priests thus enjoyed a monopoly of the literary wealth which their genius had created.

The language thus elaborated by those ancient grammarians acquired the appropriate but artificial designation of Sanscrit, a term signifying *the perfectly constructed speech.* The colloquial form of the Aryan tongue was *Hindui*, the speech of the Hindus. In lapse of ages this speech has assumed various peculiarities amongst the scattered branches of the great Hindu family, but its main characteristics still appear in the Hindi, Bengali, Uriya, Marathi, Gujarati and Punjabi vernaculars. These tongues are but offshoots from the great parent stem;

[1] *Indian Wisdom*, Introduction, p. 29.

they are children of one common parent, though each possesses distinctive features of its own. Their affinity to and ultimate dependence upon Sanscrit is so marked, as to make the expression 'dead language' hardly applicable to this latter. Without doubt it still in a sense lives and breathes. Nay, it may be regarded as the natural root from which sap and nourishment are continually rising to feed the lingual branches; in their literary developments all those tongues are still gathering force, beauty and strength by accretions from what must be called the mother tongue. The Hindus have reason to be proud of that wondrous form of speech, for therein they note the grand result of centuries of linguistic toil to which their cultured ancestors devoted themselves; nor will anyone venture to deny that, for power and precision of expression, and also for capability of expansion, the Sanscrit tongue may well claim supremacy among all languages ancient and modern.[1]

As regards many of their customs and usages, the primitive Aryan settlers differed widely from their descendants. Especially is it to be noted that nothing corresponding to caste existed amongst them; social and professional distinctions grew up amongst them, but these do not appear to have differed materially from the same distinctions amongst ourselves; no inexorable decree prevented an interchange of those distinctions, no iron hand of fate bound the children to all generations in the position which the fathers had filled.

The early Aryans, moreover, appear to have been unfettered by restrictions as regards food; they seem to have eaten together without scruple, and to have been guided by inclination

[1] To ourselves as Europeans Sanscrit has a special interest in addition to the literary treasures which it has been the medium of preserving. It is indeed the principal bond of affinity which unites us with our Aryan brethren of the East; as scholars have clearly demonstrated, the closest features of resemblance exist between the sacred language of the Hindus and the Hellenic, Italic, Celtic, Teutonic and Sclavonic languages of Europe; in fact, it is now universally admitted that all these tongues have sprung from the same common source as the Sanscrit—that source being the language spoken by our Aryan ancestors before their dispersion.

and taste alone as to the articles which they consumed. Nothing more forcibly marks the contrast between them and their descendants in this respect, than the fact that they particularly rejoiced in the flesh of the cow. It is well known that amongst modern Hindus, nothing is more abhorrent than the idea of eating beef, and to slaughter a cow for any cause whatever is a crime of far greater turpitude than to take the life of a low caste man.[1]

However the present varieties of complexion which characterise the Hindu race may be accounted for, it is abundantly clear that when the early Aryans first descended the Himalayan heights, they were a fair-complexioned race; the contrast between themselves and the aboriginal tribes in this respect is repeatedly alluded to in their sacred books; these are ever spoken of as dark, or rather as black in comparison with themselves. In the Ramayan these wild races are described as 'black, with woolly hair and thick lips.' At the present day it is no difficult matter to find whole families of Aryans as dark as are the descendants of those aborigines, yet it is unquestionable that, taken as a whole, the former are, by several shades, fairer than the latter. It is also to be noted that, as a rule, the higher the caste of the Hindus, the fairer is their skin; amongst the Brahmans, in particular, we have repeatedly met with individuals who, as regards their colour, might very well match with Spaniards or Italians. The fact, which is indisputable, that a fairer shade prevails among the high caste ladies than

[1] As a rule, respectable Hindu converts never entirely shake off their hereditary prejudice to beef; we have seen a cold shudder come over them at the sight of this dish, though at the very time they have smiled at the senseless and groundless scruple.

In some parts of India, if a man *accidentally* kill a cow, even though it be his own property, the prescribed penance is that he shall make an offering to the Brahmans or to the idol of the full value of five cows; and this money he must collect by begging from house to house, but not a word must he utter during this painful process. His errand and wants are indicated by his wearing the skin of the slain cow with its horns and hoofs, whilst he passes from door to door imitating as nearly as he can the lowing of a cow.

marks their lords, when taken in connection with their secluded life, would seem to point to at least one cause of the variety of hue spoken of. As regards the features of the Aryan and aboriginal races, respectively, the distinction is very marked. A fine profile, a high forehead, a well-formed mouth, well-set eyes, and a bright, intelligent expression of countenance, are predominant traits of the Hindu family, and of course, of such of the Mahommedans as are of Aryan origin. On the other hand, the prevailing characteristics of the aborigines are a lower forehead, high cheekbones, an irregular nose with expanded nostrils, a mouth somewhat large with full lips, eyes bright and twinkling, but rather small and deep set. The expression of their countenance is good-humoured and even mirthful, but neither refined nor intelligent. Indeed, in studying the faces of the Aryans we are compelled to feel that, barring complexion, they in every other feature closely resemble Europeans; but a mere glance at the aborigines satisfies us that they belong to some remoter branch of the human family.

In speaking of the aboriginal tribes, that is, the tribes which were in possession of the land when the Aryans entered India, it must not be assumed that those tribes had entered the country at one given time, or that they had emigrated from one common centre, or that they had previously belonged to one common stock. It is the custom to speak of them all as pertaining to the Turanian branch of our race, but, as it has been well said, 'If the term Turanian is to embrace races so widely separated by language and customs as the Dravidians and various hill tribes of India, the sooner it is expelled from the vocabulary of philologists and ethnologists the better.' [1]

Without doubt a line must be drawn between the great Dravidian races who have peopled the south of India, and the rude half-barbarous tribes which are found dwelling in the

[1] *Indian Wisdom*, note, p. 312.

jungles and on the hills of India. These latter, comprising the Gonds of Central India, the Bhils of the hills to the west of the Gonds, also the Khonds of the eastern districts of Gondvana and of the south of Orissa, the Kols and Santhals of the hills in western Bengal, the Khasias and Garos of eastern Bengal, are in all probability the descendants of wild Tartar tribes who at different periods swarmed into the country. On the other hand, the Dravidian races had probably their origin in regions not far from the ancestral home of the Aryans ; they evidently preceded the nobler race, and would seem to have established themselves in the Punjab and parts of northern India ; afterwards, when the Aryan immigrants poured into the country, the Dravidians gradually retired before them, and so at length reached their southern home. It is not unlikely that they more or less amalgamated with the Aryan invaders ; their languages contain a large admixture of Sanscrit terms, but the general structure of those languages shows them to be quite distinct from the sacred tongue of the Hindus. They possess an extensive and important literature in their own vernaculars, and they undeniably at an early period acquired a degree of civilisation to which the ruder aborigines have to this day remained strangers.

The Aryans, it is true, spoke of the aborigines collectively, as *Anaryan*, non-Aryan (ignoble) and as *Dasyus*, natives ; but in their descriptions of their numerous struggles with those tribes, very important distinctions may be noted. Their adversaries are generally depicted as monstrous in form, as furious, cruel and corrupt in disposition ; they are represented as the enemies of the gods and of good men, as eaters of human and horse-flesh, and as disturbers of sacred rites ; but some are set forth as giants, others as dwarfs, some are prodigious heroes, terrible in prowess and mien, others are hordes of monkeys ranging themselves under the generalship of mighty leaders. It does not call for a great stretch of the imagination to discern in the nobler specimens of the Anaryans the ancestors of the

superior races of southern India, whilst the monkeys point to the diminutive and agile dwellers in the hills.

In a review of the condition and history of the early Hindus the question—what was the position of their women?—is one of deep interest and importance. We may state generally, that on this point a degree of uncertainty prevails as to the actual state of things in the pre-Vedic period. By the time their literary tastes had been developed, the Hindus had doubtless, in many respects, modified their primeval traditions and usages; instead, therefore, of accepting all that their early records say as truly descriptive of their primitive condition, we should rather rely upon the substrata of allusions to an earlier state of things which they contain. Looking at the matter in this light, no one can doubt that, in that primitive period, woman's condition was a more favoured one than it was when the great Hindu lawgiver Manu describes their position, although their condition in his time was much more felicitous, or rather, much less degrading, than it has been for centuries back.

In the first place, it is a matter of absolute certainty that the cruel and inhuman rite of Suttee—the burning of the living wife with the dead husband—had no existence amongst the early Aryans; nay, it is evident also, that at the time of the writing of the Vedas, no such usage prevailed; there is no allusion to such a practice in those venerable records.[1] Indeed, Manu himself in his law books, the next in order of time to the Vedas, nowhere mentions that frightful custom. Moreover, in the Ramayan, the first of the Indian epics, dating

[1] It is true there was found in the Rig-Veda the following passage:—'Without tears, without sorrow, bedecked with jewels, let the wives go up to the altar *fire.*' This, the advocates of Suttee contended, bore upon that usage; and the impression that this rite was really enjoined in the Vedas led the British Government long to defer its suppression. There is, however, the strongest ground for regarding the last word in the sentence quoted as a corruption of the true reading the word *Agni*, fire, has there been substituted for the term *Agre*, first.

probably from the fifth or sixth century B.C., no case of Suttee is recorded. The Mahabharat, however, the second epic, shows that the rite was then slowly coming into vogue. The testimony of Strabo makes it indisputable that, at the time of Alexander's invasion of India, it was a common thing for women to perish on the funeral pile of their departed husbands. So that from, say, 300 B.C. Suttee was an acknowledged religious rite of the Hindus.

There is good ground for believing that amongst the early Aryans, polygamy, as an institution, had no legal standing. Even after Brahmanism and the whole system of caste had been evolved, Manu lays it down, as a general principle, that a Brahman should only possess *one wife*; though it is not implied that he might not legally have more. The following passage is very noteworthy, as giving us, so to speak, an undesigned glimpse of the *primitive* state of things. Manu says :—

> Then only is a man a perfect man
> When he is three—himself, his wife, his son—
> For thus have learned men the law declared,
> 'A husband is one person with his wife.'

The last line is manifestly a citation of a principle prevailing in times anterior to Manu. One can hardly fail to discern herein an echo of that great primeval utterance of Adam, the father of us all, 'they shall be one flesh.'

Manu elsewhere, in speaking of marriage ceremonies common in his day, refers to a peculiar and beautiful rite which had been practised long before his time: the usage consisted in for ever keeping alive the nuptial fire—the fire which was kindled at the time when the sacred knot was tied. No other fire than this was to be used in the morning and evening oblations which constituted the domestic worship of the early Hindus.

The high estimation in which women were held in primitive

times may safely be inferred from the respectful references to them in times when they were less favoured. Manu, for instance, seems to struggle for terms to express his regard for mothers. 'A mother,' says he, 'exceeds in value a thousand fathers.' The Mahabharat, in describing a wife, says:—

> A wife is half the man, his truest friend—
> A loving wife is a perpetual spring
> Of virtue, pleasure, wealth;—a faithful wife
> Is his best aid in seeking heavenly bliss;
> A sweetly-speaking wife is a companion
> In solitude; a father in advice;
> A mother in all seasons of distress,
> A rest in passing through life's wilderness.

'A wife is half the man:' one is inclined almost to regard our own beautiful simile, 'the better half,' as, together with that sentence, an echo coming down from early Aryan times. But, contrasting the above charming passage with the present depreciation of women in India, we cannot but cry—'Alas! how has the gold become dim! how has the most fine gold changed!' It is impossible to conceive of more perfect examples of fidelity and devotion than occur in the descriptions of women in the two epic poems above alluded to. Generally speaking, Hindu wives are depicted as models of domestic purity and simplicity. It has been well said, that in all the delineations of female excellence furnished by the Grecian and Roman poets, there is no picture to compare with the lovely and loveable descriptions given by early Hindu writers. Sita, Draupadi, and Damayanti, as women and wives, are painted in all but perfect colours; indeed we know of no other picture anywhere of *surpassing* excellence, except it be that of the virtuous wife in the book of Proverbs. (Prov. xxxi.) It will readily be conceded that, when such descriptions of women run through those ancient poems, the presumption is justified that

the females of early Hindu times were noted for domestic virtues and conjugal purity.

As regards the matter of female seclusion, it may well be assumed, looking at the tone of the early Shasters on this point, that in primitive times, hardly any restrictions were put upon the movements of women; in all probability they moved about in society without let or hindrance. But, by the time the Ramayan came to be written, their liberties were being to some extent, circumscribed; this is clearly implied in the following passage, though it shows they still enjoyed a degree of freedom to which, for long centuries, they have been utter strangers. We read:—'Neither houses, nor vestments, nor enclosing walls, nor ceremony, nor regal insignia, are the screen of a woman. Her own virtue alone protects her. In great calamities, at marriages, at the public choice of a husband by maidens, at a sacrifice, at assemblies, it is allowable for all the world to look upon women.'

The allusion to the choice of a husband brings to view a feature of early custom, than which nothing could present a broader contrast to present usages. It is well known that for ages past, Hindu girls have been married by their parents without the slightest reference to their own inclinations; indeed, seeing the rule has been, and is, to marry them in infancy, the transaction has necessarily been one over which they had no control.[1] But infant marriages were no characteristic of primitive times; women were then married at a reasonable age, and they held and exercised a power in the matter which, it is to be feared, European damsels might sigh for in vain; these latter possess the right of *veto*, but the Aryan sisterhood rejoiced in the privilege of actual *choice*. It may be doubted whether this privilege, as illustrated in the ceremony we are about to describe,

[1] The betrothal, which, in the estimation of the Hindus, is to all intents and purposes a marriage and irrevocable, should take place before the girl is eight years of age; for a child of nine or ten to be unmarried is looked upon as a grievous calamity and a standing disgrace to the family.

was not confined to the daughters of Kings and Kshâtriyas (the warrior caste), but repeated instances are mentioned in which noble maidens selected their lords on the following plan. When a lady of rank reached a marriageable age, her father would invite a company of eligible suitors to his palace or court; generally the eager aspirants were required, by some deed of prowess or skill, to prove themselves worthy of the coveted prize; in such cases the lady bestowed her hand on the happy victor. On other occasions she took a deliberate survey of the expectant group, and blessed the man of her choice by dropping a garland of flowers around his neck.

In another important respect a contrast between primitive and modern ideas must be noted. Perhaps there is no more fruitful source of misery and degradation to the women of India than the prohibition of re-marriage. The infant wife may never have spent one day with her husband, he may die before she has any idea of her relationship to him, but she is doomed to life-long widowhood, with all the horrors and privations which that condition involves.[1] The re-marriage of widows was not prohibited in primitive times. It cannot be denied that Manu in certain passages discourages the idea of re-marriage; he says, for instance, 'A virtuous wife who remains unmarried after the death of her husband goes to heaven, even though she have no son;' but this very expression implies her liberty to contract another marriage; and as a matter of fact, the marriage of widows is spoken of as being practised at that very time. Manu

[1] The moment the husband dies the widow becomes a blighted and accursed thing; she is forthwith stript of her jewels and of her delicate clothing in which she prided herself before; one coarse cloth is all she must wear; she is only allowed one meal a day, and twice in the month she must fast entirely. But the moral perils to which she is exposed are far more terrible than her physical discomforts; a life of secret or public sin too often marks her future history. Is it a matter of surprise that thousands of widows preferred the death of a Suttee to a life of such ignominy and woe? Dying thus, the Brahmans consoled the widow with the assurance that she should spend forty-five millions of years in bliss with her husband; which number, they said, corresponded to the number of hairs which he had on his body.

on one point seems to have no difficulty; he distinctly sanctions the re-marriage of a betrothed damsel whose husband may have died before they came together.

There can be no doubt that the gradual development of the system of caste materially helped to lower woman's position in the social scale; strictly speaking, that system excluded and ignored her. As a consequence, her interest in religious exercises and duties was questioned; indeed, Manu seems plainly to decree that, independently of her husband, she had no religion at all; he was to be her god, and only in connection with him could she engage in any act of devotion whatever. He puts the matter thus: 'Women have no business to repeat texts of the Veda; thus is the law established. No sacrifice is permitted to women separately from their husbands, no religious observance, no fasting. As far as a wife obeys her husband, so far is she exalted in heaven. A husband must continually be revered as a god by a virtuous wife.'

The following extracts from the law books of Manu give a sort of bird's-eye view of the whole case; they show in what estimation women had then come to be regarded, what immunities and privileges were still left to them, what disabilities marked their position, what rules of absolute dependence on others, and of unreasoning subjection to their husbands, bound them. Surely, though there are pleasing traits in the picture, it must, as a whole, indicate decided declension from that earlier state of things when, as Manu expresses it, the prevailing maxim was, 'A husband is one person with his wife.'

In childhood must a father guard his daughter;
In youth the husband shields his wife; in age
A mother is protected by her sons;
Ne'er should a woman lean upon herself.

A faithful wife who wishes to attain
The heaven of her lord, must serve him here
As if he were a god, and ne'er do aught
To pain him, whatsoever be his state,
And even though devoid of every virtue.

She who in mind, speech, body, honours him,
Alive or dead, is called a virtuous wife.

Be it her duty to preserve with care
Her husband's substance; let her too be trusted
With its expenditure, with management
Of household property and furniture,
Of cooking and purveying daily food.

Let her be ever cheerful, skilled in all
Domestic work, and not too free in spending.

Drink, bad companions, absence from her lord,
Rambling about, unseasonable sleep,
Dwelling in others' houses, let her shun,
These are six things which tarnish woman's fame.

Whatever be the character and mind
Of him to whom a woman weds herself,
Such qualities her nature must imbibe,
E'en as a river blending with the sea.

Women united by the marriage tie
To men they love, in hope of virtuous offspring,
Worthy of honour, eminently blessed,
Irradiate the houses of their lords,
Like shining lights or goddesses of fortune.

Fidelity till death, this is the sum
Of mutual duties for a married pair.

And if the wife survive, let her remain
Constant and true, nor sully her fair fame
E'en by the utterance of another's name.

As we have said, there are beautiful features in the foregoing picture, there are also suggestive traits—expressions indicative of more than is expressed. 'Fidelity till death' was not to bind the woman only, it was of *mutual* obligation. The sentiment, indeed, has the same ring with the utterance of our Marriage Service, 'till death us do part,' though that

sentiment was sounded well-nigh 3000 years ago. It seems, moreover, to exclude the idea of *divorce*; and the words 'a married pair,' most clearly point to *monogamy* as the prevailing usage. The warning against 'drink,' unfortunately settles the point, which some have disputed, that inebriety was a vice to which the early Hindus were not strangers. The good advice to the ladies to avoid 'rambling about,' not only shows that the feminine taste for gossiping marked them in those days, but that no strict rules of seclusion absolutely prevented its gratification. The description of a woman who 'weds herself to a man she loves,' is another confirmation of the fact before noticed, that women were not only married when they had reached the years of discretion, but that they exercised their discretion in the important proceeding itself. It is evident that, at the period indicated, women held a position of responsibility and trust in the domestic circle; they seem literally to have 'held the purse strings;' though Manu thinks it not superfluous to caution them against being too free in spending—an injunction the necessity for which is perhaps hardly obsolete even in our own day.

It is a legitimate inference that, if men so far trusted their wives, as to make them 'keepers of their substance,' they consulted them also in all matters relating to domestic interests. It would appear, however, as time advanced, this mutual confidence waned: men came to regard their wives as silly children to be pampered and petted, if you please, but by no means to be trusted or consulted. The Pancha-tantra, a collection of stories and fables of a later date than Manu's writings, gives to husbands the following shrewd advice :—

> Give women food, dress, gems, and all that's nice,
> But tell them not your plans if you are wise.
>
> If you have aught to do and want to do it,
> Don't ask a woman's counsel, or you'll rue it.

CHAPTER II.

THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF CASTE.

'He hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth.'—Acts xvii. 26.

It may without doubt be asserted that the Aryans originally knew nothing of caste;[1] indeed, it may be questioned whether, at the time of their invasion of India, they had any clearly marked social distinctions at all. The term Aryan, though it came to bear the sense of 'noble,' seems to be derived from a root indicating 'to plough.' Agricultural pursuits, along with pastoral, appear to have been the leading feature in the life of the early Aryans. When, in process of time, they extended their territory over the smiling plains of Hindustan, and found themselves in possession of a soil far more fertile than that which their forefathers had cultivated on the heights of Central Asia, they naturally devoted themselves with increased zest to their favourite avocation; so that in the early Hindu period, they might well be described as a nation of agriculturists. It is a curious instance of the perverted view of things which caste introduced, that, as that system grew, the once-honoured profession was more and more depreciated, until at length it was regarded as a pursuit in which only an inferior caste would be employed.[2]

[1] The word *caste* seems to be derived from the Portuguese term *casta*, race. The earliest Sanscrit word employed to define the thing signified was *varna*, colour. The use of this term would appear to imply that, in the primitive conception of caste, the varying lines of complexion were in some way taken into account. As the scheme came to be more fully developed the word *jati*, birth, took the place of varna.

[2] According to Manu other considerations ministered to the same result. He

The reader will not need to be told that the prodigious system of which we are going to speak did not spring up in a day; it was a matter of growth and gradual development. Probably the first lineaments of that system consisted of nothing more than those social distinctions between classes which, as a matter of course, grew up as society assumed an orderly and settled aspect; the necessities of civilised life would call into being a variety of professions; some of these would be more noted and influential than the rest; individual talent also would play its part in furthering those distinctions; superior mental power would necessarily bestow upon its possessors a primacy amongst their fellows. In this way the sages of the community would naturally elbow their way to the front rank. Especially would this be the case amongst a people with such strong religious instincts as marked the early Hindus; their very yearnings for guidance and increased spiritual light would incline them readily to concede the prominence which the learned class would not be slow to claim. Herein we may note the germ of the great Brahmanical order which was ultimately to monopolise the power and enjoy the homage of every other class. Probably for some ages after the Aryans settled in India, they governed themselves, and conducted their worship on the patriarchal principle; no distinct fraternity of priests figured amongst them, but the increase and dispersion of the population, together with the elaboration of their religious observances, which certainly did take place at an early period, would suggest the propriety and convenience of a sacerdotal class. Who then so well fitted for the sacred office as those who already enjoyed intellectual supremacy over their fellows? Thus a portion of the class above described would naturally find their way to the altars,

says: 'Some think that agriculture is an excellent thing, but it is a mode of existence blamed by the good, because the iron-mouthed ploughshare wounds the earth and the creatures living in it.'

as naturally would they come to feel their power and set themselves to advance their order. The already complex system of religion rapidly became more complicated: so intricate and numerous did the prescribed rites become, that not fewer than sixteen different orders of priests were required to perform the necessary offices.[1]

The word *Brahman* comes from a term signifying prayer or sacred rite; in all probability the functions of the priests suggested the name of the class from which they were drawn. In the caste system which was ultimately developed, the order next in rank to the Brahmans was that of the Kshatriyas, or military caste; their name is derived from a word implying *dominion*. Though they follow the Brahmans in the order of caste, it ought not to be inferred that they were second in order of time, or indeed of influence. It is obvious that almost from the beginning of the Aryan immigration the need of a fighting class would be felt; if not on the banks of the Indus, yet certainly, as the invaders advanced into the country, they would be opposed by the barbarous hordes then in possession of the land. Recurring assaults from those wild tribes would lead to the segregation of a body of men with leisure and taste to cultivate the profession of arms. The fact that the existence of all other classes, the peaceful performance of religious ordinances, the protection of agricultural interests, and the prosecution of commercial enterprise depended upon the courage and skill of the Kshatriyas, would necessarily stamp them with dignity and importance. Accordingly in the earliest Vedic hymns we find them described as *Rajanya*, 'the kingly class.' Anxious as the Brahmans were to establish their supremacy over their fellows—a point which in the long run they completely achieved—they were obliged to concede

[1] As an illustration of the extremely elaborate character of some of their earliest functions, it may be mentioned that one sacrifice alone—the Agnishtoma—required the services of sixteen priests, and occupied in its celebration five whole days.

the interdependence which bound them and their fighting brethren together. Manu, though speaking as a Brahman, says: 'A Kshatriya cannot thrive without a Brahman, nor a Brahman without a Kshatriya. The Brahman and the Kshatriya, when associated together, prosper in this world and the next.'

The Vaisyas constituted the *third* of the four great sections into which caste divided the Hindu family; yet the Vaisyas existed as a defined class in the social scale long before caste set its brand upon them. They were the cultivators of the soil; their name implies 'those who settle down.' It is easy to conceive how they came to inherit this definition; those of their brethren who represented the two foregoing classes might indulge their migratory habits, but the pursuit of husbandry necessitates a settled mode of life; the Vaisyas therefore remained on their homesteads, and no doubt gradually acquired hereditary rights in the lands which they tilled. According to Manu, those of this class who preferred merchandise to agriculture were perfectly free to follow their taste. Thus this section of the Hindu commonwealth consisted of the great producers, on whom all other classes relied for support. The law of mutual dependence and helpfulness governed in a very especial way the three great classes spoken of; no one section could say to the other, 'I have no need of you.' Doubtless the Vaisyas might have existed without the Brahmans, but these could not do without the Vaisyas, whilst neither the one nor the other could have maintained their footing without the Kshatriyas. The Brahmans, with good judgment and sound policy, when they worked out their caste system, administered a pleasant *sop* to each of the other sections; they permitted them along with themselves to wear a sacred thread and bear the appellation of *Dwija*, 'twice-born.' The investiture with that thread was accounted a second birth.

The three classes of the Aryan community above described represented three ideas and supplied three wants; these were

instruction, protection, support. But manifestly the need of a fourth and a servile class would be experienced, and in some way or other it had to be supplied; a variety of menial and domestic offices had to be performed which the 'twice-born' would naturally shrink from. Thus came into being the fourth order of society, which afterwards, under the name of *Sudra*, constituted the lowest class in the caste system.

Attempts have been made to derive the word *Sudra* from some Sanscrit root, but they have not been successful; there can be little doubt that the term describes a pre-Aryan race or races, which, after being subjugated by the Aryans, were pressed into their service. In all probability these were the same as the *Hudrakoi* spoken of by Herodotus; and, as in Europe the fact of numbers of the Sclavonic race being reduced to bondage and servitude gave birth to the word *slave* as descriptive of the whole class of bondmen, so did this word become a generic term for those portions of the conquered aborigines who became incorporated into the social system of the Hindus. Their ultimate recognition in the caste scheme evolved by the Brahmans was another illustration of the far-seeing policy which ruled the deliberations of the learned class; the relegation of the vanquished serfs to the position of a distinct though an inferior caste would naturally tend to obliterate their ancestral ties and sympathies, and to attach them to the religion and persons of their rulers. But though they were thus pacified and flattered, the utmost care was taken to perpetuate their condition of servitude, for only in this condition could they be useful to their lords. Accordingly no sacred thread was ever allowed to rest on their shoulders; they were ever to be regarded as the 'once-born' only; nor could they ever hope to rise to 'twice-born' dignities. As a matter of course the natural pride and jealousy of their 'twice-born' superiors tended more and more to their depression; a very hard and fast line severed between them and their more favoured brethren; for *brethren*, perhaps, they might call

themselves, since they were grafted upon the Hindu stock, and so were infinitely in advance of the *outcaste* tribes from which they had sprung; but *religious* as well as social equality was placed utterly out of their reach. The penalty of death was pronounced against any Sudra who presumed to engage in any of the acts of worship which pertained to the three privileged classes. The Ramayan gives an instance in which Ram, on beholding a Sudra engaged in such illegal worship on the shores of a lake, severed his head from his body, at which act of righteous vengeance, we are told, the gods were delighted, and showered down flowers on the head of the executioner. If, moreover, a Sudra uttered a disrespectful word towards one of the 'twice-born,' a red-hot iron style was to be thrust into his mouth. [1]

The existence of these four classes in the social system of the early Hindus was, as we have seen, in no way remarkable. This circumstance may be very easily accounted for; in fact, it is a characteristic which they had in common with other branches of the Aryan family. The Persian monarch Jamshid is said to have divided that nation into four classes; Plato, in his 'Republic,' speaks of 'four or five classes of men;' the Anglo-Saxons

[1] It is clear, however, that in early times the Sudras did now and then rise to importance in the social scale and commanded the respect of their *religious* superiors. The Puranas even speak of Sudras who rose to kingly power; and Manu in one place says, 'A believer in Scripture may receive pure knowledge even from a Sudra.'

Still, the religious inferiority of a Sudra has ever remained an immutable fact. Very curious illustrations of this may be seen any day in India. You may behold, for instance, a Brahman as poor as a church mouse going along the road; approaching him is a portly, well-dressed, well-to-do Sudra. You may see that Sudra with an air of abject reverence come up to the feet of the Brahman, then, taking off his turban, prostrate himself and put his forehead in the dust, whilst the Brahman gives his benediction by placing his foot on the head of the prostrate man. You may see another Sudra rush up to the Brahman with a dish of water in his hand; into this the Brahman dips his foot, and forthwith the other devoutly drinks the holy draught. In the Native army you may see a Sudra captain drilling his company, which contains, perhaps, several Brahmans. Whilst on parade the Brahman private, of course, obeys and salutes the Sudra captain; but wait until drill is over, and you may behold the Sudra captain throw himself at the feet of the man who, though his military subordinate, is *religiously* to him a god.

also originally ranged themselves under four distinct heads—artificers, husbandmen, soldiers, and clergy; nor is it to be questioned that instinctively in the present day we resolve ourselves into four great classes— the nobility, the upper middle and lower middle classes, and the working class. The grand feature of distinction between the Indian Aryans and their brethren elsewhere is seen in the religious crystallisation of these divisions which followed the introduction of caste amongst the former. Without doubt, Indian caste owes its origin to a principle which is characteristic of human nature at all times and in all lands. This principle has obtained different degrees of development among different nations; the highest degree has been attained in India. Wherever slavery has existed, there has this principle operated. Slavery among the Greeks approached much nearer to Hindu caste than did the same institution among the Romans.[1] The prevailing notion of the Greeks was that the slave was *by nature* inferior to his lord; a state of slavery therefore naturally befitted him. There were, indeed, those who repudiated that doctrine. Aristotle, for instance, speaks of some who maintained that slavery existed *νόμῳ* only; they regarded it as an artificial thing of man's devising, having no root in nature, but actually *παρὰ φύσιν*, contrary to the nature of things; these, however, were evidently a small minority; the majority held that a natural law bound the slave in his position and cut him off from the rights and immunities of the higher order of men. Still Hindu caste is unique in respect of the *religious* character which has been stamped upon it. The low-caste man in India carries with him, not only the stigma of social degradation, he is to the higher castes a polluted and polluting object, a sort of moral leper, whose touch, breath, shadow, are all contaminating. No parallel to this is to be found, we believe, elsewhere.

[1] Seneca, speaking of the slaves of Rome, says, 'Are they not sprung from the same origin, do they not breathe the same air, do they not live and die just as we do?'

According to that system, the Brahmans had their origin from the mouth of Brahmā, the Kshatriyas from his arm, the Vaisyas from his thigh, and the Sudras from his foot. The Brahmans, as proceeding from the mouth of Deity, claimed not only precedence in rank, but actual pre-eminence by nature over all other castes; according to Manu's Code, they were to be regarded as gods in human shape, and divine homage was to be paid to them by all their fellows. The great Lawgiver, besides the superiority of origin which marked the Brahman, ascribes his superhuman excellence to three other considerations—to his possessing the Vedas, to his enjoying the right of studying and expounding them, and to a peculiarity in the mode of his investiture; it has been remarked above that three of the castes were privileged to wear the sacred thread, but certain solemn rites were made to accompany the bestowal of that symbol on the Brahman which had no counterpart in the investiture of the other 'twice-born' castes.

The following passages from Manu will give a further view of the tremendous assumption of power and dignity which the Brahmans put forth:—'A Brahman, whether learned or unlearned, is a mighty divinity, just as fire is a mighty divinity, whether consecrated or unconsecrated.' 'Even when Brahmans employ themselves in all sorts of inferior occupations, they must under all circumstances be honoured, for they are to be regarded as supreme divinities.' 'From his high birth alone, a Brahman is regarded as a divinity even by the gods. His teaching must be accepted by the rest of the world as an infallible authority.'

The reader will be prepared to learn that, when the Brahmans on such grounds claimed the homage of all men, they were shrewd enough to gain capital of another kind from these pretensions: they were most solicitous to impress kings and all in authority with a sense of the awful power which inhered in them; they ever pointed to the peril attending

those who oppressed them; a terrible vengeance was sure to overtake them; nay, it was unlawful and dangerous to require them to contribute in any degree to the charges of the state, hence they claimed in the following passage immunity from taxation: 'Let not a king, although fallen into the greatest distress (through a deficiency of revenue), provoke Brahmans to anger (by taking revenue from them), for they, if once enraged, could instantly destroy him with all his army and retinue.' Again: 'What king would gain increase of revenue by oppressing those who, if angry, could create other worlds and guardians of worlds, and could create new gods and mortals?'

Of course they claimed to be a privileged class as regarded the penal statutes; for no crime or number of crimes might capital punishment be inflicted on a Brahman; the worst penalty which could be enforced against him was banishment. Personal violence towards a Brahman would be visited with the most terrible consequences; we are told, 'He who merely assails a Brahman with intent to kill him, will continue in hell for a hundred years, and he who actually slays him, for a thousand years.' 'As many particles of dust as the blood of a Brahman absorbs from the soil, so many thousands of years must the shedder of that blood abide in hell.'

The more the organisation of the caste system is studied, the more one is impressed with the subtle contrivances for augmenting and perpetuating Brahmanical influence which marked it. Viewed in this light, that whole system is a master-piece of ingenuity, a standing evidence of the far-seeing astuteness of the learned and priestly order. As regards the subordinate castes, things were so pleasantly arranged that they should be gratified with seeming privileges and immunities, should believe themselves highly honoured and blessed by having a standing within the charmed circle; but everything was so sedulously guarded that they were compelled to look to

the Brahman as the centre and source of all their privileges; he was the sun round which they, as satellites, must ever revolve; without him they could do nothing—could indeed have no existence at all. Moreover, whilst the Brahmans were welded together in one compact and solid fraternity for the maintenance of their mutual rights and dignities, anything like a rebellious compact of the three inferior orders was rendered impossible; the inexorable rules which severed each from the other—the impassable lines of demarcation which ran between them—rendered a combination between them for a common object utterly impracticable. More than once indeed did the proud Kshatriyas resent the arrogance of the Brahmans and struggle to cast off the yoke which galled them; but in vain they strove; the divine sanctions and the superstitious fears on which Brahmanical power was founded proved stronger than weapons of steel and an arm of flesh. At length the great fact came to be understood and conceded, that *all lived for the Brahman, and that the Brahman governed all.* Human nature being what it is, we can readily conceive how, as the ages rolled along, priestly pride and tyranny at last reached such prodigious proportions that a reaction was inevitable. Such a revolution, however, was only possible *outside* the caste system; it remained for Buddhism, a system which swept away all caste distinctions, to make the first resolute stand against the intolerable evil; but we must not anticipate the topic of a subsequent chapter.

As regards the Kshatriyas, we have seen that they figured at different periods as temporal rulers in the commonwealth; as such they were, as it has been remarked, flattered and smiled upon by the Brahmans; but they were ever instructed to look up to their religious superiors as advisers and guides; they were to entrust much of their judicial authority to those sacred hands, and in any matter of legal doubt, the Brahmans alone could give an authoritative ruling. In *domestic* matters

the whole of the three inferior castes were, throughout life, compelled to realise their dependence on the Brahman; everything was made to hinge on this principle; religious duties which he only could perform necessitated his appearance at every turn; marriage rites, ceremonies in connection with the conception, with the birth of a child, with its first feeding with rice, with sundry purificatory and sacrificial observances, ever brought the Brahman into requisition, so that it might almost be said that, religiously and socially, 'in him the people lived and moved and had their being.'

Theoretically the Brahman was poor in this world's wealth, and rich in spiritual treasures; but even if monastic history had not taught us how such a theory may become an empty fiction, we should be prepared to find that the sagacious and subtle Brahman made it so. He took very good care indeed of his material interests; he not only annexed material remuneration as a *sine quâ non* to his services, but he very shrewdly made the vitality and efficiency of those services to be proportioned to the amount of liberality which his disciples displayed. On this point Manu speaks with no uncertain sound. He says: 'A sacrifice performed with trifling presents destroys the organs of sense, fame, heaven, life, reputation, offspring, cattle; therefore let no man undertake sacrifice who has not plenty of money to make liberal gifts.' 'Let a man, according to his ability, give wealth to Brahmans who know the Vedas and keep apart from the world; by so doing, he obtains heaven when he dies.' 'All that exists in this universe is the Brahman's property.'

In matters of diet, the Brahman had to submit to certain restrictions; on no account was he to drink spirituous liquor—this was included amongst the five great crimes of the Hindu Code;[1] he was also forbidden to eat garlic, onions, leeks, mush-

[1] The other four are—killing a Brahman, stealing gold from a Brahman, adultery with the wife of a Guru or spiritual teacher, and associating with one who has been guilty of any of these crimes.

rooms, and carnivorous birds. As a general rule, the eating of animal food was discountenanced; yet it is curious to note the contrast between the utterances of Manu on this subject and the teachings of later times. It is well known that, gradually, the eating of flesh meat came to be regarded as a mortal sin. That in Manu's time no such rigid notion prevailed is perfectly clear from the following passages: 'Never let a Brahman eat the flesh of cattle unconsecrated with mantras, but let him eat it only when hallowed with texts of the Vedas.' 'In eating meat, and in drinking wine,[1] there is no crime (provided it be on a lawful occasion).'

Although, in its original conception, the caste system only embraced four grand divisions, it could hardly fail in lapse of time to admit of modification and expansion in this particular; however stringent the rules for maintaining the integrity of the system, these were sure, amid the exigencies of social life, to be at times transgressed. These rules are all but innumerable, yet they all hinge upon three leading principles; they relate to—1. Food and its preparation, 2. Intermarriage, and 3. Professional pursuits. For a high-caste man to eat with one of low caste, or even to eat food cooked by one lower in the scale than himself, caused defilement and prejudiced his caste. Food cooked on board a boat or ship was pronounced to be destructive of caste. So rigidly do some of the Brahmans to this day uphold the principle involved in these restrictions, that they will on no account eat in the presence of a low-caste man; and if, during the process of cooking, the mere shadow of such a man in passing should fall upon the food, or should the hem of his garment touch the vessel which contains it, in either case the whole of the viands are thrown away, and the vessel, if of earthenware, is broken. But it is obvious that the very elaboration of these restrictive regulations ensured their failure; in ten thousand

[1] Doubtless, unfermented wine is here implied.

unavoidable conjunctures such minute rules were sure to be infringed. In the same way the prohibitory laws governing the intercourse of the sexes of different castes presented no such barrier as human nature was not sure to surmount. So also with regard to professional pursuits: a craving for wealth or distinction or convenience would be certain to urge individuals, and ultimately whole classes, to cross the prescribed boundary.

The actual consequence of these inevitable tendencies has been practically to destroy and obliterate the two middle castes; the Kshatriyas and Vaisyas have really at the present time no lineal descendants. It is true the Rajpoots do claim to be the true representatives of the ancient military caste, but the Brahmans generally refuse their claim, that is, they do so in every other province of India but Rajpootana, where the Rajpoots rule; that the Brahmans concede the claim when they happen to dwell within the district indicated is a feature quite in keeping with their usual address and policy. Some of the mercantile castes of the present day also try to trace their pedigree up to the old Vaisya caste, but with very dubious success.

It might seem at first sight that the Brahmans, by instituting such impracticable rules for the maintenance of caste, really overreached themselves, and helped to abolish what they were so eager to uphold. This may be so as regards the inferior orders, but that nothing of a *suicidal* character mingled with the blunder, if blunder it was, is clear from the fact that the priestly order alone has survived the general wreck. The subordinate castes have, by force of circumstances, faded away into endless subdivisions; in the present day every separate trade represents a separate caste, and the same strict rules of isolation as prevailed in early days divide these one from the other; the Brahmans, however, have throughout all these transmutations, not only maintained their position, but have continued

to enjoy the veneration and fatten on the bounty of every other section of the community.

It must not be supposed that no change of any kind has passed over them. The Brahmanical order is no longer an undivided family; its members have felt the disintegrating effects of those influences which tended to the subversion of the inferior castes; they have been divided into numerous branches; these varying sections have varying degrees of rank and importance, and amongst many of them so real is the division, that intermarriage and eating in common are considered unlawful; but, in their case, division has not resulted in subversion or obliteration—a Brahman is a Brahman still to all below him; he is still, whatever may be his status amongst his fellows, a being to be worshipped and propitiated by all his inferiors. Yet though every Brahman receives the homage of all below him, each Brahmanical subdivision is allied to and finds its support from some one or more of the subdivisions of the inferior castes.[1]

[1] In the Dekkan there are several distinct sections of the Brahmanical race. The one which occupies the first place in the list is called *Chittapavana*, meaning 'heart-purifiers.' It is a singular fact that the notorious Nana Sahib of Bithoor belonged to this class—strange irony for such a monster to bear such a title!

In no part of India has the Brahman order passed through so many and great changes as in Bengal. History tells of a time when in that province religion fell to such a low ebb that a king named Adisura sent to the King of Kanouj, begging him to send a number of high-caste Brahmans to aid in restoring it. Accordingly the Brahman missionaries were sent; it may be inferred that they succeeded in resuscitating the dying devotion of the people, but it was at the cost of their own unity; for in process of time their descendants actually resolved themselves into no fewer than one hundred and fifty-six separate families. One hundred of these were called Varendra; the rest, from living in the district of Radha, in Western Bengal, took the name of that locality. Altogether fourteen families of the whole number rejoice in the rank of *Kulin*, 'noble.' One of the privileges of the Kulins is a very dubious one;—they are entitled to marry as many wives as they please without being bound to support any of them. A Kulin may have, say, fifty wives, all living with their parents; he has, it may be, no certain dwelling-place, but pleasantly migrates from family to family on periodical visits to his wives, he, of course, being well entertained on those occasions. Some years ago, as a matter of curiosity, the domestic relationships of twenty-seven Kulin Brahmans were traced and it was discovered that these twenty-seven men rejoiced in a grand total of 850 wives! The great honour attaching to union with a Kulin Brahman accounts for

It would be an error to suppose that the manifold changes which have come over the caste system have reduced its aggregate force or lessened its hold upon the people; rather might it be said that the multiplication of subdivisions has tended to extend and consolidate the principle of caste in the Hindu family. That in our days caste is becoming less potent, less real, more shadowy than it was, is what no one can doubt who has studied the phases of modern Hindu society; that mighty engine of tyranny is every year relaxing its iron grasp upon the millions who own its sway, but this grateful fact is owing to the operation of a variety of agencies and influences altogether external to and distinct from the tribal or caste changes above described. An account of these agencies will be given in a later chapter.

Looking to the moral influence of caste on the Hindu nation, it is impossible to deprecate the system too strongly; its tendency has been to eat out human sympathy, to annihilate fellow-feeling, to render the heart callous, cruel, and selfish. No one who has not dwelt in India can understand the extent to which this terrible induration of the national heart has gone; it is hard to make untravelled Europeans grasp the astounding reality, for Christianity, apart from its deeper and more vital effects, has undoubtedly impregnated society within its wide

the existence of this extraordinary state of things. Within the last few years, however, two or three decisions in the High Court of Calcutta have sorely disturbed the peace of the Kulin, for they have taught him that he, like any other man, may be compelled to support not only *a* wife, but any number of wives he may choose to marry. The six Kulin families best known in Bengal are called Banerjea, Mukherjea, Chatterjea, Gangooli, Ghoshala, Kanjalala. The Kanouj Brahmans brought with them into Bengal a number of *Kayasthas* or 'writers;' their descendants are now divided into numerous families, who all bear in common the definition of Kayastha. Their leading names are—Ghose, Bose, Mitra, Dey, Dutta, Palita, Dass, Sen.

It is a singular fact that amongst the many *outcaste* tribes who hang upon the outskirts of Hindu society, the *Chandalas* are accounted the most unclean, although these are the offspring of a union between a Brahman's daughter and a Sudra. Formerly they were precluded from entering towns or villages in which the caste races dwelt, and they were only allowed to wear dead men's clothes.

domain, with much of its kindly and compassionate tone; the milk of human kindness, fed from that sacred, heaven-born source, is ever kept flowing, so that a brotherhood of sympathy more or less intense binds merely nominal Christians together. It is far otherwise in India; caste has not destroyed the power to feel and to love, but it has dammed up the stream of affection within such narrow and selfish limits that it cannot spare one drop of its genial waters to refresh the arid region beyond its own confined boundary. No people in the world is more marked for domestic tenderness than the Hindus; a kindly regard for their outer circle of acquaintances too may be seen—this is diluted into a respectful recognition of all the members of their particular caste; but anything in the shape of active and general benevolence for even their own caste-folk is never thought of.[1] Outside their own caste the weal and woe of their fellows affect them in no degree whatever. We have again and again witnessed along the great pilgrim routes of India harrowing illustrations of this sad truth; we have seen poor creatures, smitten with disease, lying on the road side passed by hundreds of their co-religionists with no more concern than as if they were dying dogs; we have seen the poor parched sufferers with folded hands and pleading voice crave a drop of water to moisten their lips, but all in vain. Hundreds thus perish, untended, unpitied, unaided; perhaps even before death does its work, the vultures and jackals begin theirs, and thus lines of whitened bones and bleached skulls border the roads leading to the sacred shrines; and whence this worse-than-brutal callousness? What

[1] We do not deny that very many acts of public utility—as the digging of wells or tanks, or the building of Ghauts—are performed by wealthy families or individuals. For centuries back have such good deeds been executed all over the country. In the same way, on the occasion of certain religious ceremonies, especially at the funeral rites for a deceased father, hundreds, or even thousands of poor people of all castes or no caste are feasted, but all this is a confirmation of the hard, selfish principle we speak of; for no such Hindu benefactor will deny that his highest motive in these acts is to procure personal merit for himself, or to facilitate the repose of the departed; beyond these he has no other aim.

has dried up the springs of human sympathy? *it is Caste.* This first of all taught the people to look upon differing castes as different species, it next taught the lesson of defilement by contact; thus utter isolation and heartless selfishness account for the whole of the sickening scenes described. Either the dying man is known to be of low caste or his caste is unknown; to approach him, to touch him, might result in pollution; hence he is left to his fate.[1]

Nor is it to be doubted that caste has been as prejudicial to the moral and religious sense of the people as to their natural sympathies; it has indeed drawn a death-like pall of gloom over their moral perceptions, so that multitudes seem to have lost the power of discerning things that differ, and, as it were, instinctively, 'put darkness for light, and light for darkness, call good evil, and evil good.' Perhaps the seed from which this deadly crop of perverseness has sprung has been passages like the following, which appear in the 'Institutes' of Manu. 'A Brahman, by retaining the Rig-Veda in his memory, incurs no guilt, though he should destroy the three worlds.' What are the things which jeopardise caste? not moral delinquency. Theoretically, no doubt, certain moral offences are prejudicial to caste, but practically all moral considerations are ignored; a Brahman may be known to be a monster of wickedness, a thief, liar, adulterer, murderer, but his sanctity as a Brahman remains unaffected by these crimes: he will still be worshipped by his disciples, and still will they drink the water of his feet as a

[1] We do not remember in connection with such distressing scenes ever seeing a sign or hearing a word of pity expressed by the passers-by. This may appear still more unaccountable, for we could conceive of a religious dread of pollution deterring a person from actively aiding the sufferer, though he really felt for his sufferings. Here, however, another consideration comes in to complete, so to speak, the *ossification* of the feelings—the doctrine of transmigration teaches that all our sufferings and enjoyments in the present life are merely the natural and necessary consequences of our good or evil doings in a previous life. Hence the Hindu reasons—'That poor wretch is only suffering the due recompense of his former misdeeds. Fate decrees it; why should I interfere with Fate in giving him his just desert?'

holy thing; but let that Brahman, even by accident, eat forbidden food or touch an unlawful object, and the curse of uncleanness at once falls upon him. Further, let the Brahman who is branded with the black list of crimes we have just enumerated, repent of his evil ways and become a meek and holy follower of Christ, and then, from the very moment of his baptism to his death, he is regarded as a fallen and degraded wretch, and the very abjects who before worshipped him in his defilement, would shrink with horror from contact with him.

Strange and anomalous, moreover, as it may seem, a man's belief or disbelief has nothing whatever to do with his caste. This is not a peculiarity of modern times; it was true 2,500 years ago; numbers of Brahman Sages not only imbibed un-Hindu and Atheistic notions, but they fearlessly avowed them, yet their caste dignities and privileges remained intact. In the present day, not hundreds, but tens of thousands of educated natives have lost all faith in and reverence for Hinduism; caste itself they do not believe in, except as a part of that vast system of superstition which in heart they repudiate; yet, passing strange though it seems, it is an undoubted fact, that all this does not in any degree prejudice their caste standing; everybody may be perfectly aware that they do thus repudiate the national creed, do thus laugh at caste notions, yet everybody accords to them, notwithstanding, all the honours and immunities of the caste to which they belong. Nay, further, the persons we speak of may have assumed more than a negative position with regard to Hinduism; they may not only disbelieve in that system, but they may thoroughly and unreservedly embrace the doctrines of Christianity: they may avow their convictions to all around them, they may say to all, 'I am a Christian in heart,' but they stand as regards caste, on the very same footing with the most devout and orthodox Hindu in the country. We are acquainted with not a few educated natives at the present time who answer to this description.

The above considerations are important to be borne in mind by those who would rightly understand and duly estimate the institution of caste. It is thus clearly seen that, tenacious of life and mighty in influence as caste may be, it is after all a superficial and a gross thing; moral character and religious convictions are neither disturbing nor supporting elements in that system; they are, in short, outside its sphere. The things which prejudice caste are, as has been stated before, intermarriage with one of inferior caste, eating food with such an one, and contact with unclean objects. It is thus obvious that mere Christian teaching will neither terrify Hindus nor imperil their standing in society: the Sepoy troops which, in 1857, broke into revolt might have been preached to every day of their lives, and they would have viewed that as an innocuous proceeding; but the touch of a so-called greased cartridge aroused their worst fears and bitterest resentments; *that*, and not teaching, endangered their caste. In the same way, were the Bible, as a matter of routine, to be read in every class in every Government school or college throughout the country, no Hindu pupil or parent would think that a cause of contamination; but let a boy eat one mouthful of food at the hand of the European principal or professor, and dire damage is done, and the vials of wrath would assuredly be poured out.[1]

We have said in an early part of this chapter that the laws of caste are immutable, its lines impassable. As regards the *present life* they are so; the members of one caste cannot effect a transition into another; no amount of merit, no degree of asceticism, not 'all the wealth of the Indies,' could convert a Sudra into a Brahman. But, though impossible in the

[1] We are not in this illustration reflecting on the existing state of things in Government schools and colleges. The whole question of religious instruction in those institutions is one so encompassed with difficulty—one in which the *desirable* and the *practicable* are so hard to harmonise, that we maintain for the present a discreet silence on the subject. We use the above remark as an illustration and nothing more.

present life, such a change is not beyond the bounds of possibility in a future birth. Here again we are brought face to face with the amazing versatility of resource and adroitness of management which have ever characterised the Brahmans. The doctrine of transmigration of souls very early gained a firm footing in the country; the Brahmans very discreetly absorbed it into their system, and so dovetailed it with their caste organisation as to impart additional strength and importance to that scheme; they taught their disciples the lesson of caste gradation in future births; they impressed upon the Brahman the need of strict attention to the present duties of his caste, by holding before him the dread prospect of his being born a Sudra in the next life as a penalty for remissness; they prompted the Sudra to redoubled zeal in the performance of his obligations—a main feature of which was the liberal feeding and feeing of Brahmans—by an assurance that he might in his next birth be recompensed by 'twice-born' dignities.

In connection with the worship of Juggernath (Lord of the world) a very remarkable tradition exists; its date and origin are, we believe, lost in obscurity—the theory is, that within the sacred enclosure of the temple of that deity caste has no recognition; in the presence of 'the Lord of the world,' all men are equal. Accordingly there is, within that limited area, nothing to prevent the Brahman and the Sudra shaking hands as brothers, and sitting down to partake of one common meal. They may do this in the sight of Juggernath and with his approval; they may do it also without prejudice to their caste-standing amongst their fellows, but the instant they have recrossed the privileged boundary, their respective caste distinctions bind them with all their wonted stringency. Such, as we have said, is the *theory*; but this is a case in which practice belies theory, for, we believe, such commingling of castes is never actually witnessed within the precincts of Juggernath at

the present day. Yet it is a point of some practical importance that such a theory exists; it is one of many instances in which Hinduism furnishes arguments whereby the system itself may be assailed.

On a review of this whole subject certain convictions force themselves upon us. The first impression is, that caste is a thing positively unique; there is nothing in any country with whose history we are familiar, ancient or modern, with which it can be compared: it has a social element, but it is not a social distinction; it has a religious element, but it is hardly a religious institution; it finds its sanction in a religious idea, inasmuch as Brahmā is said to have been its author, but it lives on irrespective of religious faith or observance.

Another impression must have struck the reader—that such an institution must necessarily constitute a formidable drawback to those who are trammeled by it. It operates as a deterrent to progress of every kind; it dissipates all aspirations to rise in the lower ranks of society and fosters a spirit of selfish arrogance in the upper;[1] it destroys mutual sympathy, and renders impossible a healthy combination of classes for the common weal; it sets its ban upon commercial enterprise and foreign travel; no Hindu can cross the sea without imperilling his caste. Not very long ago a native judge was asked by the Bombay Government to proceed to England at the public expense, to give evidence before the Finance Committee of the House of Commons. His reply was, 'I think it would be a farce in me to appear as a witness and at the expense of the public, when a considerable and intelligent part of that public not only disapproves of my doing so, but is sure to persecute me by excommunication, against which no human ingenuity

[1] Practically, the prospect of retribution or recompense in a future birth is inoperative: we believe you might search in vain for a Brahman or Sudra who modifies his present conduct in any degree from a regard to the degradation or elevation which may ensue in a future state of existence.

in India has yet devised a remedy, and no law of the land or earthly power can give any protection.'[1]

Of all the obstacles to the evangelisation of India, this is by far the most formidable. The subtlety of the Pundits, the philosophy of the Sages, the hereditary attachment of the people to their ancient creed, though real and serious difficulties, are trifling compared with this terrible obstruction; all these may be overborne, these, as the outworks, may be effectually stormed and carried, but the dread form of caste, like an all-but invulnerable barrier, rises to the view, and arrests the tide of conquest. The judgment may be convinced, the heart impressed, but the fearful consequences of decision stare the individual in the face, and no wonder that he falters. The higher his caste, the heavier the cross which threatens him. To be loathed by all who once loved him, to be mourned for as *dead* by her who bore him, to have the finger of scorn pointed at him by all his associates, to be doomed for life to social ostracism as a polluted thing, is the penalty of conversion which caste inflicts; truly the marvel is *not* that so *few*, but that so *many*, have had strength and courage to avow their convictions at such a cost.

It is an undoubted fact, that although, as we have said, a mere belief in Christianity leaves caste unaffected, the event of a man's *baptism* brings upon him the dire penalty above specified; he is, *ipso facto*, *outcasted*. This is curious when we bear

[1] The *Indu Prokash*, a Hindu organ, in commenting on the above case, gives vent to its indignation in the following burning words:—'The tyranny of caste extends from the most trifling to the most important affairs of Hindu life. It cripples the independent action of individuals, sows the seed of bitter discord between the different sections of society, encourages the most abominable practices, and dries up all the springs of that social, moral, and intellectual freedom which alone can secure greatness, whether to individuals or nations. It has pampered the pride and insolence of the Brahmans, by teaching them to look upon themselves, notwithstanding all their weaknesses, as the favourites of gods, nay, the very gods on earth who are to keep the lower orders in a state of utter degradation and illiterate servitude. Such is our caste system; so unjustifiable in principle, so unfair in organisation, and so baneful in its consequences to the highest interests of the country.' Strange protest from the pen of a Hindu! but this is only the articulate breathing of a growing repugnance felt by the educated classes towards such an unnatural and monstrous system; multitudes who lack courage thus to denounce the evil do in their heart of hearts long for its overthrow.

in mind that this act does not in itself involve any transgression of caste rules; the convert may never eat forbidden food, may contract no forbidden marriage or any ceremonial uncleanness, but the water of baptism is, by common consent, regarded as destructive of caste.[1] Consequently it is no uncommon thing for a Hindu father to be utterly unmoved by his son's heterodoxy so long as he keeps aloof from that ordinance; but let the son determine to avow his faith in that solemn rite, and immediately, not the father only, but all that belong to him are frantic with excitement, and move heaven and earth to prevent the execution of the design. If fair means will not suffice, then too often foul means are resorted to; forced confinement, and cruel stripes are tried. Should these fail, then—alas! we speak of the things which we know too well—a diabolical attempt to deprave the morals of the youth may follow, for it is quite understood that sensuality and Christianity have nothing in common, and that a victory on the side of the former is likely to ensure a breach with the latter.[2] Should this foul scheme fail, then it is quite within the bounds of possibility that, to save the family from the dire disgrace foreboded, the victim of this persecution may be drugged so as to destroy his intellect, if not his life.

[1] This is at least the case in North India. We have repeatedly seen illustrations of this kind. It has been our rule to keep back enquirers from any overt transgression of caste rules up to the time of their baptism; our object has been to remove any ground for their repudiation by their friends; we have then, immediately after baptism, sent them back to their families; in no single instance, however, have they been received. In one case a father, an educated and liberal-minded man, was wishful to retain his baptised son in his house, but the prejudices of his friends and neighbours were too strong for him; he had to accept the painful alternative of casting out his Christian son or of being outcasted with his whole family. With bitter tears he made the former, as the least terrible sacrifice.

[2] This kind of involuntary homage to the superior morality of Christianity is shown in many ways by the people of India; there can be no doubt that an impression is all but universal that Christianity is a holier thing than Hinduism. Such an impression, even on a darkened conscience, must have a certain moral weight. Those who are familiar with early Church history will at once recall parallel instances to the above revolting form of temptation and trial.

Such is caste! What more terrible source of evil, what more formidable deterrent of good could be conceived of? No wonder that Sir William Jones, three quarters of a century ago, avowed his conviction that no Brahman would ever be converted; that great Orientalist formed this opinion from a view of the caste difficulty. It is an assuring and comforting circumstance that we have lived to see the day when converted Brahmans may be reckoned by scores; we are privileged moreover to discern what that great man never dreamt of, the slow but certain disintegration of that mighty system of thraldom; as we shall see hereafter, not one or two, but manifold agencies are working together for its dissolution. He who is wonderful in operation and wise in counsel is smiting it, as it were, with an unseen hand. Already one short but telling account may be given of it—it is dying, yet it lives; lives on the credulity of the ignorant and the sufferance of the educated; but knowledge is power, and knowledge is spreading; ignorance is darkness, and darkness is receding—*ergo*, its days are numbered.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY HINDUISM.

'Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways; nevertheless He left not himself without witness.'—Acts xiv. 16, 17.

OUR last chapter may be regarded as in some degree proleptical, for, chronologically, the development of caste falls within the era of the present chapter; still, as that institution cannot fairly be regarded as a necessary *outcome* of early Hinduism, but rather as a huge excrescence which grew up side by side with it, it seemed desirable, considering its surpassing and peculiar importance, to accord to it an independent and separate discussion.

It has been said with great truth that the early history of the Hindus is a *religious* history; religion is a more prominent feature in their early records than is the case with any other nation; nor will it be denied by those who have compared the people of India in this respect with other peoples, that they are pre-eminent for the *religious instinct* which has at all times marked them. It has often struck us that if St. Paul had preached in India, he would have applied to the Hindus with especial emphasis the commendatory epithet which he addressed to the Athenians; indeed, if he declared the latter to be '*very* religious'[1] he would probably have described the former as

[1] The rendering of the word used by St. Paul (Acts xvii. 22) as 'too superstitious,' is certainly unfortunate; δεισιδαίμων simply means 'reverencing the gods.' Paul uses the comparative of the word because, as he goes on to argue, the Athenians had not been content to worship their *known* gods, but had set up an altar to an *unknown* god besides. This felicitous adaptation of a local object, this skilful and conciliatory mode of address, are thoroughly in keeping with the Apostle's ordinary mode of speaking and writing, and may furnish an example which modern missionaries will do well to copy.

most religious. Nothing to our mind is more touching, more solemnly interesting, than this characteristic of the Hindu race. Of no nation on the face of the earth may it be said with greater or perhaps with *equal* truth, that they have ever been 'feeling after God, if haply they might find him.' Erroneous as their conceptions of Him have been, still it cannot be doubted that they have approached nearer the true ideal than any other people unblessed with the light of Revelation.

Hinduism in its earlier development stands out distinct, not only from the Fetichism of barbarous races, but from the religious systems of civilised nations of antiquity. Their hero-worship, which indeed constitutes their main aspect, had no counterpart in early Hinduism; it was only after ages of effort to see the Unseen, to know the Unknowable, to grasp the Infinite, that the Hindus at length betook themselves to deify mortals and to worship the objects by which they were surrounded. So, too, as regards the spiritual aspirations and yearnings expressed by the religious systems we speak of. It is indisputable that Hinduism transcends them all in this particular feature; it reveals a profounder sense of sin and need, deeper longings after things unearthly and divine; it shows more clearly the working of the inner springs of the human mind and conscience, than do the systems of other races. That Hinduism, nevertheless, utterly failed of leading its votaries to a right perception of God, and ultimately lapsed into a system of degraded polytheism and idolatry, in many respects little better than the fetichism of savage tribes, is only a confirmation of the great truth involved in the enquiry, 'Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?' (Job xi. 7, 8.)[1] The feature of gradual deterioration just

[1] Again and again do the Indian sages seem, like Plato in his 'Alcibiades,' to yearn for supernatural teaching; that earnest seeker after truth says: 'We must wait patiently until some one, either a god or some inspired man, teach us our moral and religious duties; and, as Pallas in Homer did to Diomede, remove the

alluded to, Hinduism has in common with every other uninspired form of religious belief; this is a noteworthy circumstance, and naturally suggests the enquiry how it is to be accounted for— how, for instance, it comes to pass that the history of mankind, outside the pale of revealed religion, should show intellectual and religious light advancing along parallel lines, but in an *inverse ratio*, the former steadily increasing, the latter as steadily waning.[1] Such a fact seems hard to be reconciled with the notion, either that man's religious knowledge is intuitive, or that it is a legitimate outcome of his intellectual and reasoning powers; in the former case, how could he have lost that knowledge? in the other case, how could he have helped increasing it? If, however, we take in the idea of some grand primeval revelation to the progenitors of our race, which, as a sort of central sun, shed its rays upon the different branches of the human family before their separation and dispersion, a natural and probable solution of the whole problem meets us. We can thus account for the gradual attenuation of the rays of light as they receded farther and farther from their source; we can see how great and holy truths, which for long ages depended for their preservation and transmission on memory and oral teaching, would naturally be endangered and even distorted, especially those which clashed with men's natural tastes. This supposition, too, goes far to account for the undeniable fact that

darkness from our eyes.' Xenophanes, too, sums up his work on Nature with a similar acknowledgment of darkness and doubt. 'No man has discovered any certainty, or will discover it, concerning the gods, and what I say of the Universe; for, if he uttered even what is most perfect, still he does not *know* it, but conjecture hangs over all.' Such ingenuous confessions of ignorance on the part of those ancient worthies contrast favourably with the singular boldness wherewith certain speculators in our day put forth their untried theories.

[1] This remark is made with reference to the tendencies of men in their *national* and *collective* capacity. That from time to time individuals have risen far above the level of their fellows, and have, by their loftier conceptions and teachings, shed a meteoric brightness on the age in which they lived, we do not deny; but the popular deterioration has gone on nevertheless, so that we may say such cases are really 'the exceptions which prove the rule.'

analogous fragments of truth are traceable amidst the *débris* of popular faiths held by nations which for decades of centuries have been totally isolated from each other.

It is impossible accurately to fix the period in which the religious traditions of the Indian Aryans found a stereotyped expression in the composition of the Vedas; there seems strong ground to suppose that the oldest of those four sacred records, the Rig-Veda, cannot be assigned to an earlier date than 1200 B.C. In all probability the Aryans found their way to India some centuries before that, so that no doubt many of the hymns and prayers and sentiments contained in that remarkable book had been orally conveyed for generations before that period. Some of those utterances were probably brought from the ancestral homestead in Central Asia; though doubtless the greater part originated in India. It is pretty certain that the art of writing had existed for a considerable time before the Rig-Veda was composed; but it is evident that the early Hindus had conscientious scruples on the subject of inscribing their holy sayings; for a long time, no doubt, these feelings prevailed, and deferred the compilation which was afterwards made. The ground of the objection was singular; these ancient sages seem to have regarded their oral treasures as literally *divine breathings* expressed by articulate sound, which they called *Shabda.*[1] They appeared to think the writing of these sounds or words as almost a sacrilegious proceeding; but the vast accumulation of their literary treasures was at length felt to necessitate and to justify this measure.

The word Veda simply means knowledge; by the early Hindus it was applied to *divine unwritten knowledge.* After the composition of the sacred books, this title was naturally

[1] It is impossible not to note the fact that the very word used by St. Paul as depicting the divine origin of the Scriptures is a word (θεόπνευστος) which means *divinely-breathed* (2 Tim. iii. 16). In the same way the Hindu notion of an eternally-existent *Shabda*, sound or word, naturally carries our thoughts back to the glorious doctrine of the eternal λόγος, the true and divine Word.

bestowed upon them, as being the repository of their sacred knowledge; as a matter of course, sentiments of intense veneration began to cluster around them, until at last the attributes of divinity and eternity were ascribed to them. The following eulogy of these holy books will show to what a pitch the feeling of reverence for them had grown in the days of Manu:—

> The Veda is of patriarchs and men,
> And e'en of gods, a very eye eternal,
> Giving unerring light; it is beyond
> All finite faculties, nor can be proved
> By force of human argument—this is
> A positive conclusion. . . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> Whatever doctrine rests not on the Veda,
> Must pass away as recent, false, and fruitless.
>
> . . . .
>
> By this eternal Veda are sustained
> All creatures; hence we hold it as supreme—
> Chief instrument of happiness to man.

Various, and indeed very contradictory, accounts are given of the origin of the Vedas; but whatever the story may be, the principle of divine inspiration is ever assumed as an attribute of those sacred records.

The names of the four Vedas are Rig, Sama, Yajur, Atharva. Manu, indeed, only speaks of *three* Vedas; it is evident that, though the Atharva existed in his day, it had not been elevated to the exalted rank which was afterwards accorded to it. Practically, the Rig-Veda reigns alone and supreme; as it is the most ancient, so is it by far the most important of all. It strikes the key-note for the strains poured forth by the rest, it furnishes the text on which they enlarge; the second and third attempt little more than a reproduction and reiteration of its contents.

By far the most interesting portion of the Rig-Veda consists of what are called the *mantras*, the prayers, invocations, and

hymns, in which the early Hindus were wont to express their devotional feelings.[1] These are invaluable as giving us an insight into the theological and moral ideas which they held, and the outgoings of their souls in connection with them. The compilation of those devout breathings took place, we may say, some two hundred years after Moses wrote the Pentateuch, but the breathings themselves carry us back, at least many of them do, to a period long anterior to Moses. Probably at the very time that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were rearing their altars for the worship of Jehovah, devout Hindus were standing by corresponding altars in India and offering up some of the very prayers and praises which we now read in the Rig-Veda.

Of the 1017 hymns and prayers contained in the Rig-Veda, probably not one had been handed down in its primitive purity; all had been more or less affected by the uncertain medium of their transmission; doubtless here and there, in passing through successive generations, they caught and reflected a tinge from current ideas. This would be especially the case with the oldest of those compositions. This circumstance should be borne in mind in studying those venerable records; we shall thus be led, not so much to regard them as faithfully depicting the religious sentiments which the Aryans brought with them into India, but as including those sentiments with many later accretions. We shall expect to find those sacred utterances a sort of theological mosaic, in which varied forms and hues strike the eye in a somewhat confused and irregular order; we shall not be surprised, for instance, to find monotheistic, polytheistic, and pantheistic elements commingling in rather a chaotic style; we shall not wonder at finding conceptions the most sublime and truthful standing in juxtaposition with puerilities the most ridiculous

[1] The contents of the Vedas may be ranged under three distinct heads.—1. *Mantra*, prayer and praise expressed in texts and metrical hymns; 2. *Brahmana*, ritualistic directions written in prose; 3. *Upanishad*, mystical teaching appended to the Brahmana, the greater part being in prose, the rest in metre.

and fanciful. This is really a picture of the contents of the Vedas; they contain religious and moral sentiments so exalted in tone, that they command our esteem and even *astonishment.* We wonder whence such pure rays of light were derived; we are inclined to say, Surely these must have come down from above; but anon we come upon other passages so grovelling and degraded, that we are compelled to cry, These are of the earth, earthy. Who will say that the inference in either case is not the right one? It is *not* our intention to dwell on the *darker* features; our concern is rather to see how much of pure light and truth the ancestors of the Hindu nation possessed. We apprehend our readers will see sufficient ground to acknowledge that verily God 'did not leave Himself without witness' among them.

Could we carry our researches backward to the time when the great Aryan family dwelt together in unbroken fellowship and primitive simplicity, we should probably find them in some sort worshipping the one true and living God. Abundant traces of some such a primeval condition are to be found in the records with which we are dealing. The very oldest of the mantras, however, relate to a subsequent stage, and one of deterioration; these indicate an unmistakable tendency to physiolatry. The early Hindus, with certain ideas of a Supreme Being, but without a divine revelation to guide them, naturally cast about for some fitting expression of their ideal of the Deity; they as naturally fixed their attention on the visible phenomena of the universe; the most glorious of these were the first to arrest their thoughts and call forth their veneration. In the first instance they doubtless regarded and honoured those objects as works of the great Author of all; they 'looked through Nature up to Nature's God;' but, as time advanced and their religious system and ordinances of worship gained expansion and consolidation, they naturally glided into idolatry; idolatry not indeed of the grosser kind—for the Rig-Veda

contains, we believe, not a single instance of image-worship—but the objects and forces of Nature gradually became deified, and, as this tendency developed, in the same proportion did the earlier and more worthy conceptions of the deity fall into the shade, so that, long before the Veda was drawn up, the fathers of the Hindu race were 'worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator;' not that they entirely lost sight of Him, for it is a singular fact, that their devotional outpourings now and again sparkle with a bright thought indicating a latent consciousness of a High and Holy One, distinct from and above Nature.

The Indian Aryans seem from the earliest times to have had some inkling of the great truth that 'God is light.' They regarded light of every description as in some sense a manifestation of the Divine Being. Accordingly, luminous objects were the first to command their reverence: they saw the Deity in the shining firmanent of the heavens; they saw Him also in fire on the earth and in the clouds.

It would appear indeed that the Aryans before their dispersion had begun to reverence *Dyaus*, the sky or heaven. The Sanscrit root of the word is *Dyu*; the Greek and Latin branches of the Aryan family seem to have preserved the same roots in the words *Zeus* and *Ju*piter. The same appears also in the old German *Tiu* or *Ziu*.[1] This Dyaus, by the time the earliest of the Vedic mantras were composed, had become personified, and was represented as the husband of Prithivi, the earth. All things are said to have originated from this marriage of heaven and earth. But this is only one of many and various accounts of the Creation.

Dyaus means the visible heavens, or the firmament. But when man had once begun to seek God in His works, the area

[1] Our *Tuesday* evidently bears the same feature. In the same way no one can help connecting the Sanscrit *Deva* (God), with the Latin *Deus* and the Greek *Theos*.

of his researches was sure to go on expanding. The Aryans next enquired what might exist beyond the azure canopy; the vast regions of illimitable space suggested to them the idea of infinity. This idea found its expression in the worship of Aditi, as representing the boundless fields of space. The very capaciousness of the idea in time led to the identification of this deity with everything; Aditi was accordingly honoured as a goddess whose womb contained every other object. Of her it is sung: 'Aditi is the sky, Aditi is the air, Aditi is the mother, father, son; Aditi is the collective gods; Aditi is the five persons; Aditi is whatever has been born; Aditi is whatever is to be born.' Thus early and thus naturally were the seeds of Pantheism sown in the Hindu system.

Next in order appear Mitra and Varuna. These are represented as the sons of Aditi; the one is said to rule the heavens by day, the other by night. The extreme beauty and suggestiveness of the nightly firmament no doubt accounts for the superior attention bestowed upon Varuna (Greek, *Ouranos*); the homage paid to him far eclipsed the honours of Mitra. The following extract from the Atharva-Veda will illustrate the devotion rendered to this deity, and also show the attributes with which his devotees invested him:—

> The mighty Varuna, who rules above, looks down
> Upon these worlds, his kingdom, as if close at hand.
> When men imagine they do aught by stealth, he knows it.
> No one can stand or walk or softly glide along,
> Or hide in dark recess, or lurk in secret cell,
> But Varuna detects him and his movement spies.
> . . . . Whoe'er should flee
> Far, far beyond the sky, would not escape the grasp
> Of Varuna the King. His messengers descend
> Countless from his abode— for ever traversing
> This world, and scanning with a thousand eyes its inmates.
> Whate'er exists within this earth, and all within the sky,
> Yea, all that is beyond, King Varuna perceives.
> The winking of men's eyes are numbered all by him.

It is an interesting and suggestive thought that at the very time the royal psalmist of Israel was composing his eighth and nineteenth songs of praise to Jehovah—beholding Him in the glories of the star-lit firmament, thousands of Hindu sages, gazing on the same firmament, were pouring forth the above strains in adoration of the deity which they saw therein. How forcibly do those devout breathings remind one of another psalm of David (139th), in which he ascribes to Jehovah the same attributes of omniscience and omnipresence, and in almost the same language as the Hindu sages applied to Varuna.

Thou knowest my downsitting and uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? and whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

Possibly the thought has occurred to the reader that such lofty conceptions as are expressed in the above hymn to Varuna must indicate a latent perception, shadowy and clouded though it may be, of a mightier Being than was involved in the personified firmament. Certainly we are not disposed to question this inference. Other still more solemn and touching addresses to this deity may well strengthen such an impression. The study of the heavens manifestly awakened in the mind of the Hebrew sage above referred to a deep sense of helplessness and need; the very same feelings seem to have wrought in the minds of

the Indian sages when they drew up their ascriptions to Varuna. The Rig-Veda contains the following remarkable Litany used in the worship of this god:—

> Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter the house of clay; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
>
> If I go trembling like a cloud driven by the wind, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
>
> Through want of strength, thou strong and bright God, have I gone to the wrong shore; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
>
> Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
>
> Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the heavenly host, whenever we break thy law through forgetfulness; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

In another address to Varuna the idea of *spiritual longing* is expressed by a pastoral figure which compels one to think of another utterance of the sweet singer of Israel. 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God'—Psalm xlii. 1. The passage runs thus:—

> Yearning for him, the Farseeing, my thoughts move onward as kine moving to their pastures.

As nature-worship advanced the above impersonations of the sky and celestial sphere were felt to be too vague and indefinite; the various physical forces of the heavens and of the atmosphere began to assume the character of distinct and separate deities. In this way Indra, the dispenser of rain and dew; Vayu, the wind-god; and Agni, the god of fire, as seen in the sun and lightning, not only gained a footing amongst the older deities, but gradually superseded them. Even Varuna was stripped of his dignities and relegated to a secondary position in the divine hierarchy.

In all this it is not only easy to discern the process of declension and deterioration, but the principle upon which it advanced; self-interest, a regard to *temporal* well-being, took the place of

higher and more spiritual aspirations. The Aryans were pushing their way in the country; the broad plains of Hindustan were coming into their possession; this gave an immense impetus to the pursuits of husbandry and agriculture, this again compelled the Hindus to realise more than heretofore their dependence on atmospheric and solar influences, and ultimately led to the deification of those influences.

Of the three last-named deities Indra became by far the most popular object of worship.[1] The absolute dependence of a country like India on the usual rainfall, and the terrible consequences of a drought, would necessarily bring this god into special prominence; he was indeed the Jupiter Pluvius of the early Hindus, and the greater number of their hymns and prayers were offered up to him. Indra is represented as maintaining a conflict with certain demons who oppose him in his efforts to pour down the fructifying showers. These are Sushna, the drier; Vrittra, the coverer, who strives to retain the rain in the clouds; and two others, named Pani and Ahi, who in different ways labour to frustrate the beneficent designs of Indra. Prayers and sacrifices go up from men with the purpose of strengthening the hands of the god in his conflict on their behalf and confirming him in his benevolent intentions.

The peculiar idea connected with these devotional suffrages is important and well worthy of note; it is an idea which runs throughout the whole system of Vedic worship, and indeed remains to this very day; it is that, in the exercise of his devotions, man puts forth a power to which even the gods must succumb; man,

[1] It must not be supposed that what has been called 'the process of decentralisation' rested content with the substitution of these three deities for the essentially celestial Varuna; the centrifugal tendency necessarily went on extending the area of superstition and multiplying the objects of adoration. Vayu, for instance, the god of wind, soon had in his train a host of subordinate deities called *Maruts*, the storm-gods, and *Rudra* himself, who was emphatically the god of storms. There grew up also a body of secondary deities, called *Adityas*; these numbered twelve, and answered to the varied influences of the sun during the twelve months of the year.

by the intensity of his asceticism, the number or value of his sacrifices, and the earnestness of his petitions, may compel the favourable regard of the deities. In a later stage of Hinduism the gods are represented as at times oppressed and distressed by this power of devotion, and as endeavouring to prevent the execution of those omnipotent exercises; but in the Vedic scheme of religion the gods are shown to be friendly to men, willing and wishful to bless them, but requiring to be strengthened and encouraged in subduing opposing powers. The very same notion of the force of prayer exists among uncivilised and barbarous nations, only in their case its power is seen in compelling reluctant deities to bless, or preventing hostile deities from injuring their worshippers. Modern Hinduism has clothed many of its deities with malevolent attributes, and these are approached in a spirit similar to that just described.

It cannot be denied that there is something suggestive and also *true* in the impression of the early Hindus as to the mightiness of prayer. It would be no difficult matter to illustrate this idea from our own holy Book, in which God seems to teach us that it is a law of His spiritual kingdom that *His acting* is, to a great extent, *dependent on our praying.*

The following extract will give some idea of the early homage paid to Indra:—

> . . . . Thou wast born
> Without a rival, king of gods and men—
> The eye of living and terrestrial things.
> Immortal Indra, unrelenting foe
> Of drought and darkness, infinitely wise.
> Terrific crusher of thy enemies,
> Heroic, irresistible in might,
> Wall of defence to us thy worshippers,
> We sing thy praises, and our ardent hymns
> Embrace thee as a loving wife her lord.
> Thou art our guardian, advocate, and friend,
> A brother, father, mother, all combined.
> Most fatherly of fathers, we are thine

And thou art ours. Oh ! let thy pitying soul
Turn to us in compassion when we praise thee,
And slay us not for one sin or for many.
Deliver us to-day, to-morrow, every day.

. . . .

Vainly the demons dare thy might; in vain
Strive to deprive us of thy watery treasures,
Earth quakes beneath the crashing of thy bolts.
Pierced, shattered, lies the foe—his cities crushed,
His armies overthrown, his fortresses
Shivered to fragments; then the pent-up waters,
Released from long imprisonment, descend
In torrents to the earth, and swollen rivers,
Foaming and rolling to their ocean home,
Proclaim the triumph of the Thunderer.

No one who has witnessed a tornado, commonly called a *north-wester* in India, can fail to be struck with the justness of the poetic imagery here employed to depict such an event. For days, it may be for *weeks*, the sky has been burdened with clouds charged with the needful watery stores; millions of longing eyes have watched their shifting course and changing forms; ever and anon it has seemed as though the refreshing streams were about to descend, but, as if pent up and restrained by an invisible hand, the clouds have refused to pour down the desired blessing; at length one point of the sky gathers blackness, a deep inky hue spreads over one half the heavens, the wild birds begin to shriek and betake themselves to the nearest shelter; for a few moments an ominous, death-like calm seems to reign; nature appears to be listening in awful expectation of the coming outburst; in another instant a dazzling flash of lightning is seen, followed by terrific rolls of thunder; at the same moment a hurricane sweeps across the plains, sometimes uprooting massive trees in its course, and darkening the air with clouds of sand and dust; a deadly conflict seems to rage amongst the elements, the lightning is more brilliant,

the crashes of thunder more awful, yet the rain does not come. But the strife does not last long; now isolated big drops begin to fall, then torrents of water pour down from the bursting clouds; driven along the wings of the storm the rain sometimes appears like drifting cataracts or oblique sheets of water. Speedily parched fields are inundated, and empty rivers swollen. All this takes place in less than an hour; then the storm abates, the darkness passes away, the sun once more shines forth, the atmosphere is cooled and purified, thirsty nature is satisfied, and all creation seems to rejoice. Is it matter of surprise that a scene such as this should, to a people at once imaginative and devout, suggest the religious ideas which found their expression in the worship of Indra?

Next in importance to Indra was the god of fire, *Agni* (Latin, *Ignis*). This deity included the sun as the manifestation of fire in the firmament, though the orb of day, as *Surja*, received separate and distinct homage. Agni embraced within his domain lightning, fire on the earth, indeed fire in every form. He was especially recognised in the sacrificial fire which ascended heavenward from the blazing holocaust.[1]

The following address to Agni will be read with special interest, as it brings to view an aspect of the deity which we would hardly have expected to find in heathen mythology:—

> Giver of life and immortality,
> *One in thy essence but to mortals three*;
> Displaying thine eternal *triple-form*,
> As fire on earth, as lightning in the air,
> As sun in heaven. Thou art a cherished guest
> In every household—father, brother, son,
> Friend, benefactor, guardian, all in one.

[1] There is every reason to believe that the early Hindus reared their altars and conducted their worship under the open canopy of heaven, just as did the patriarchs of the Bible. Indeed, they seem to have been strangers to anything like public or congregational services; their worship was chiefly of a domestic character, and their priests figured more as domestic chaplains than as public ministers of religion.

Bright, seven-rayed god! how manifold thy shapes
Revealed to us thy votaries! . . . .
Deliver, mighty Lord, thy worshippers;
Purge us from taint of sin, and, when we die,
Deal mercifully with us on the pyre,
Burning our bodies with their load of guilt,
But bearing our eternal part on high,
To luminous abodes and realms of bliss,
For ever there to dwell with righteous men.

It is impossible to read the above touching and beautiful address without the query again forcing itself on the mind—did not the devout souls who breathed such sentiments invoke under the term Agni a Being higher and holier and mightier than material fire. Very affecting is it to note the trembling sense of sin, the solemn anticipation of the dying hour, the clear discernment of the soul's immortality, and the yearning desire for admission to the blissful rewards of an eternal state, which find expression in this remarkable prayer.

But the one point to which we would specially call attention is the singular idea of a *Trinity in unity* which comes out in this address. Were this an isolated and solitary instance of the kind we should not lay much stress upon it; it might in that case be explained by a speciality in the nature of the fire-god which suggested this notion to his own worshippers. But what are we to say when the very same idea confronts us in manifold aspects, in various eras and in connection with different deities. One thing is indisputable—a singular sacredness and importance ever attached to the number *Three*; and another thing is equally clear, that, in the sacred literature of the Hindus, the notion of *unity of person* or essence, with a *triple manifestation*, is a prominent feature. In the above passage we see Agni described as '*One* in essence but to mortals *three*,' and as displaying an 'eternal *triple-form*.' These ideas are afterwards reiterated in the post-Vedic Triad, Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva; these deities are described as

'three in one, and one in three.' In the Raghu-Vansa a striking passage occurs in which the inferior gods are addressing Vishnu as the Supreme Being; they accordingly ascribe to him the attribute in question:—

> Hail to thee, mighty Lord, the world's creator,
> Supporter and destroyer, *Three-in-One*—
> One in thy essence, tripartite in action.

In the Kumara-Sambhava the following is addressed to Brahmā:—'Hail to thee of *triple form*, who before creation wast simple soul, and afterwards underwent partition for the distribution of the three Gunas (qualities).'

Nor can it be doubted that the awful sacredness attaching to the triliteral syllable, *Om*, as indicating the deity, involved the same idea—three in one, one in three. Manu speaks of the three Vedas as being included in this mysterious word.[1] The ceremonies likewise practised in the consecration of a Brahman clearly point to the same profound verity. The sacred cord with which he was invested was to consist of *three threads*; before receiving the cord he had to walk three times round the sacred fire; then, wearing the cord he was initiated by the officiating priest into the use of the Savitri or holy prayer in the three-metred Gayatri; this was said after three suppressions of the breath and the pronunciation of the sacred syllable *Om*. After this he was authorised to repeat the three Vedas and perform the religious rites of his order.

We are fully aware that not a few good and able men refuse to see in all this the remotest reference to the glorious doctrine of the Triune Jehovah so plainly taught in the Bible. We cannot help thinking that, in rejecting the idea of all reference to that

[1] This sacred monosyllable is supposed to include the three letters A. U. M., and signifies the later Hindu triad, Brahmā, Vishnu, Siva. There can be little doubt that the Trident, the three-pronged fork which appears on every Siva temple, is to the Hindus what the Triangle is to us—it symbolises their notion of Three in One.

revealed verity, those persons ought to furnish at least some plausible or probable theory as to the origin of such ideas, and the use of such language, among the early Hindus. Suppose the ideas to bear an actual relation to the revealed doctrine of the Trinity, and to have been derived from some primitive tradition, or from intercourse with those blessed with a truer and purer faith, and a natural and sufficient solution of a peculiar phenomenon is at once found; but reject this solution, and, so far as we can see, the phenomenon is inexplicable. We do not need to be reminded that the Hindu notion of a Trinity in unity clashes in certain important particulars with that doctrine as held by the Christian Church; but surely no one would expect to find in the Hindu Shasters an accurate delineation of that sacred dogma; it is enough if there be a fundamental outline of resemblance to the glorious truth in question. No one denies, or attempts to deny, that there is such a resemblance, and our convictions go with those who trace herein an adumbration of the great and solemn verity on which the church of Christ is grounded, and a further illustration of the great truth before adverted to, that God has not left himself without witness even among those who lack the perfect teaching of a divine revelation.[1]

The celebrated Gayatri already spoken of was used in an address to Surja, the sun; he is therein invoked in his character of the 'Vivifier.' This has ever been regarded as the most sacred text of the Rig-Veda; it is used to this day by every Brahman in his daily devotions. It runs thus:—'Let us meditate on that excellent glory of the divine Vivifier. May he enlighten

[1] We regard it as no slight confirmation of the view we adopt that the Rev. Professor Banerjea, of Calcutta, has all along consistently held this opinion. When we find such an eminent scholar as this distinguished convert, a Brahman of the Brahmans when a Hindu, and now confessedly the leading member of the native church in Bengal, second to none in Sanscrit learning and Vedic lore —when we find such a man unhesitatingly declare his conviction that his venerable ancestors did, in the way specified, foreshadow the glorious doctrine of the Trinity, it cannot be said that such a view is crude or utopian.

our understanding!' Surely the impression that the more devout and enlightened of the Hindus sought spiritual illumination from a truer and better Light than the material sun may well be entertained.

The Hindus of the pre-Vedic period seem to have had no idea of transmigration; this doctrine was a conception of a later era. Their notion of the condition of the departed seems to be this: they regarded the spirits of the righteous as dwelling in bliss, but as occupying three distinct localities or states; the highest order dwelt in the upper sky, the next inhabited the intermediate air, the lowest rank possessed the atmosphere immediately surrounding the earth. These were all presided over by the god of death, *Yama.* He is generally spoken of as death itself, at other times death is said to be his messenger. Yama is said to have been the first of the human race who died; after his death he obtained the supreme control of the spirit-world; he is spoken of as in some way winning that control, and as welcoming the righteous to the bright home which he has secured for them. The following remarkable language is addressed to this deity:—

> He was the first of men that died, the first to brave
> Death's rapid rushing stream, the first to point the road
> To heaven, and welcome others to that bright abode.
> No power can rob us of the home thus won by thee.
> O king, we come; the born must die, must tread the path
> That thou hast trod—the path by which each race of men,
> In long succession, and our fathers too, have passed.

Then follows this striking apostrophe to a departed spirit:—

> Soul of the dead, depart! fear not to take the road—
> The ancient road—by which thy ancestors have gone;
> Ascend to meet the god—to meet thy happy fathers,
> Who dwell in bliss with him. . . . .
> . . . . . Thy sin and shame
> Leave thou on earth: assume a shining form—
> Thy ancient shape—refined and from all taint set free.

Very solemn and impressive were the funeral rites practised by the early Hindus. First of all a piece of ground was set apart and consecrated; then the corpse was borne to the sacred spot, the relations carrying with them fire, the animal for sacrifice, and the sacrificial implements. The most advanced in years followed the bier in single file—the men on one side, the women on the other. After the body was deposited upon the funeral pile the widow lay down by its side, and so remained until her husband's brother came and removed her with the address,—'Rise up, O woman; come back to the world of life; thou art lying by a dead man; come back; thou hast sufficiently fulfilled the duty of a wife and mother to the husband who wooed thee and took thee by the hand.' After the sacrifice was offered, the pile was kindled at three points, representing the three states of the departed above referred to; whichever of the three fires first reached the body, the spirit was supposed to depart to the corresponding region in the spirit-world. After the cremation the bones and ashes were collected in an urn and buried, the following touching address accompanying the act of interment:—

> Open thy arms, O earth, receive the dead
> With gentle pressure and with loving welcome.
> Enshroud him tenderly, e'en as a mother
> Folds her soft vestment round the child she loves.

Lastly a mound of earth was raised over the grave, the following words marking this final act:—'I raise up the earth around thee for a support, placing this cover on thee without causing injury. May the fathers guard this funeral monument for thee! May Yama establish for thee a habitation there!'

It is a singular fact that, though the Hindus had no idea of a resurrection of the body, they still believed that the soul had a covering provided for it; they seem to have had no conception of a world of naked spirits; they held that a subtile and spiritual body invisible to mortal eyes awaited each soul as it

quitted its grosser tenement. Invested in this ethereal form, the spirit rose to heaven in the smoke which ascended from the funeral pile.

We have already more than once adventured the conjecture that the nature-worship of Vedic times did not exclude an ultimate recognition of a great Author of nature. As a confirmation of this inference, and as a specimen of several passages in the Rig-Veda couched in monotheistic language, we cite the following. The Being spoken of is described as distinct from nature and the gods, and is said to be—

> The one sole Lord of all that is—who made
> The earth, and formed the sky, who giveth life,
> Who giveth strength, whose bidding gods revere,
> Whose hiding-place is immortality,
> Whose shadow, death: who by his might is king
> Of all the breathing, sleeping, waking world;
> Who governs men and beasts, whose majesty
> These snowy hills, this ocean with its rivers,
> Declare; of whom these spreading regions form
> The arms; by whom the firmament is strong,
> Earth firmly planted, and the highest heavens
> Supported, and the clouds that fill the air
> Distributed and measured out; to whom
> Both earth and heaven, established by His will,
> Look up with trembling mind; in whom revealed
> The rising sun shines forth above the world.
> Where'er let loose in space, the mighty waters
> Have gone, depositing a fruitful seed
> And generating fire, there he arose
> Who is the breath and life of all the gods,
> Whose mighty glance looks round the vast expanse
> Of watery vapour—source of energy,
> Cause of the sacrifice—the only God
> Above the gods. May he not injure us!
> He the Creator of the earth—the righteous
> Creator of the sky, Creator too
> Of oceans bright, and far-extending waters.

Such sublime and noble sentiments read almost like an echo of some of the inspired utterances of the Hebrew prophets, albeit they were conceived long before one of those prophets was born. This hymn was probably one of the earliest drawn up by the pre-Vedic sagès; it may therefore be regarded as giving us a view of the theology of the Aryans in its primitive and purest stage.

It will be observed that the above hymn speaks in unhesitating terms of the Almighty Being described as the Creator of all things. Another remarkable hymn attempts to explain the process of creation. The striking feature in this composition is a singular admixture of certainty and doubt, speculation and assumed fact; it breathes a cry of ignorance and at the same time a declaration of knowledge.

In the beginning there was neither naught nor aught,
Then there was neither sky nor atmosphere above.
What then enshrouded all this teeming universe?
In the receptacle of what was it contained?
Was it enveloped in the gulph profound of water?
Then there was neither death nor immortality,
Then there was neither day, nor night, nor light, nor darkness,
Only the existent One breathed calmly, self-contained.
Naught else than He there was—naught else above, beyond—
Then first came darkness hid in darkness, gloom in gloom.
Next all was water, all a chaos indiscreet,
In which the One lay void, shrouded in nothingness:
Then turning inwards he by self-developed force
Of inner fervour and intense abstraction, grew.
And now in him Desire, the primal germ of mind,
Arose; which learned men, profoundly searching, say
Is the first subtle bond, connecting Entity
With Nullity. This ray that kindled dormant life,
Where was it then? before? or was it found above?
Were there parturient powers and latent qualities,
And fecund principles beneath, and active forces
That energized aloft? Who knows? Who can declare?
How and from what has sprung this Universe? the gods
Themselves are subsequent to its development.

Who, then, can penetrate the secret of its rise?
Whether 'twas framed or not, made or not made. He knows
Who in the highest heaven sits; the omniscient Lord
Assuredly knows all—or haply he knows not.

Such are the dim conjectures and vague guesses by which the early Hindus sought to solve the great problem of creation—a problem which the light of revelation alone can solve. Not very unlike these, and certainly not more probable and satisfactory, are some of the speculations with which certain philosophers amuse themselves and their readers in the present day.

It is to be noted, however, that in the above hymn certain great facts are assumed as resting on a basis of actual knowledge. The first point taken for granted is that, prior to the existence of the gods and of the universe as we know it, there was a self-existent Being. The other fact, about which no doubt is expressed, relates to the state of the universe or world when the work of creation began; the picture drawn is one of watery chaos, and profound, unbroken darkness. That these leading points are put forth as settled facts, whilst the *details* of the work of creation are dealt with as matters of pure speculation, would certainly seem to indicate a groundwork of tradition as supporting the former. This, at least, is a most natural inference; and it is not a little remarkable how literally the traditional account of the early Hindus as to a state of primeval chaos corresponds to the opening sentences of the Bible:—'And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep,' Gen. i. 2.

Though there is no reasonable doubt that the ancestors of the Hindu race held a monotheistic creed, it is quite clear that at a very early period the seeds of Pantheism were sown in that primitive faith; the poisonous germ slowly but surely struck its roots into the venerable system, and ultimately changed its character and aim. It could hardly be otherwise; indeed, we

see herein the natural and necessary issue of physiolatry among a people with a metaphysical turn of mind. As we have before stated, the Aryans in the first instance, feeling after some concrete conception of the Deity, began to approach Him through the medium of His works; nature was to them the Deity symbolised. But necessarily in time a divine halo gathered around the symbols; they, as the nearer objects, were discerned without effort by the bodily eye, whilst the glorious Being typified could only be traced by a mental process of reflection. The great truth that 'the eye affects the heart,' thus operated most prejudicially; the more earnest the realisation of the objects honoured, the more thorough the homage paid to them, the more surely did they supplant and obscure the great Object of man's adoration. The very endeavour to trace God in His works, by those who cannot study Him in the mirror of divine revelation, thus inevitably leads to nature-worship; the one supreme God becomes many separate and local deities; an indefinite multiplication of these follows as a matter of course. In the earlier stages of polytheism the objects and forces of nature which were most helpful to man attracted his chief attention; these were worshipped, and their assistance sought, as friendly and beneficent deities; but the denial of blessings craved, and the recurrence of evils deprecated, naturally suggested the idea of malevolent influences as limiting the power and nullifying the gracious intentions of the *good* gods. This again led to the conception of hostile deities; these had to be propitiated by servile homage, whilst those had to be strengthened and encouraged by sacrifice and devout adoration.

Such, in the main, seems to have been the history of physiolatry in the world. Amongst the Hindus, however, side by side with this tendency to Polytheism, a corresponding tendency towards Pantheism has ever been discernible. But, indeed, it is hardly correct to speak of these as two separate tendencies running in parallel lines; they actually intermingle

and intersect each other in a way that is most puzzling, and all but unaccountable. This feature would be unaccountable were we to leave out the consideration of one great fact—the fact that a monotheistic conviction seems to have resolutely clung to the Hindus and to have struggled for life and expression throughout all the changing vicissitudes of their mythology. Through their whole religious history, a voice which they could not silence, seems to have ever cried, 'Though we may make gods many and lords many, yet *God is one!*'[1] Along with this impression of the unity of God was an idea of the infinity of His attributes; accordingly, with logical inconsistency, but quite in accordance with these convictions, we find each deity invoked in turn as if he were supreme. Obviously such instincts and convictions only needed a little more expansion and development to bring Pantheism to the birth; gradually the feeling after the Infinite led to the denial of the Finite. What had been considered separate entities came to be regarded as parts of the great whole, and all other beings to be merged in the one All-pervading, All-comprising Being; all other existences but the one Self-existent, came to be viewed as visionary and unreal.

The following extract from one of the later hymns of the Rig-Veda is a specimen of the pantheistic *ring* which now and then may be heard in those venerable records. Speaking of God it says—

> He is himself this very universe,
> He is what ever is, has been, and shall be.
> He is the Lord of immortality.
> All creatures are one-fourth of him, three-fourths
> Are that which is immortal in the sky.

[1] Even in the present day, when Hindus, without blushing, tell of their 330 millions of gods, you ever hear them, in their common converse, speak of God as *one*. Probably no people in the world bring the divine name into such prominent and frequent use as the Hindus. They will not, for instance, write the smallest note without heading it with the name of a deity; so, in conversation, they constantly (*never irreverently or profanely*) mention the holy name; but when they do so, they ever speak in the *singular*; it is *Ishwara*, God, or *Parameshwara*, the Supreme God.

All that we have said above as to the commingling of polytheistic and pantheistic notions strictly applies to the state of orthodox Hindu opinion at the present day. After labouring for years amongst natives of all classes, we are prone to confess our utter inability to define the extent to which these opposite views relatively affect the people; without doubt, the Pundits, the learned class, gravitate more towards pantheism than do the common people; to these latter polytheism must ever be more comprehensible and more popular than the abstruse conception which teaches them to ignore their own individuality. Yet, it is strange but true, that you ever and anon hear from the lips of illiterate persons—persons steeped in polytheistic superstition, a remark which shows that they, in some rude way, do really grasp and apply the principles of pantheism. On the other hand, the pundits feel no difficulty in openly and theoretically propounding a pantheistic creed, whilst they rigidly—and by no means hypocritically—conform to polytheistic worship. Repeatedly have we been accosted by a pundit in the following strain: 'But, Sahib, why speak to us as though we were what we seem to be? don't you know that it is all *maya*, illusion? Of course we seem to ourselves to be men and women with independent powers and existence, but so does the dreamer feel all to be real that passes through his mind in his sleep; it is, however, all illusion nevertheless: in the same way you and I and all we seem to say, to do, to enjoy, to suffer, is *unreal*; our supposed existence is visionary, for nothing and no one exists but He who is the one All-pervading Entity.' Perhaps someone asks, 'How do you refute such a wild statement?' Echo responds, How? for it is obvious that, if everything else be illusory, the refutation itself must be so too; your speaking, arguing, thinking, all partake of the great *unreality*; nay, the very statement itself, with the pundit who seems to make it, and yourself who seem to hear it, are all *maya*, illusion!—

which, it will be admitted, is a tolerably perplexing and difficult aspect to deal with.[1]

A few observations on the law of sacrifice amongst the early Hindus will interest our readers. No fact is more evident than that, in some way or other, this institution has been of all but world-wide prevalence; and, probably, to those who repudiate the idea of the divine origin of this institution, no fact is more difficult to account for. The prevalence of *human* sacrifices amongst barbarous races, whose deities are represented as demons of ferocity and cruelty, admits more readily of solution; the great difficulty is to show how—on what grounds—with what object, bloody sacrifices obtained amongst a people like the early Hindus, refined, civilised and kindly disposed, their deities being objects of love and veneration and full of benevolence to their worshippers. The ideas of justice and equity came out clearly in the conceptions of those early worshippers and in the attributes of their gods; how then, it is natural to ask, came they, in the first place, to grasp the improbable notion that an innocent animal could in any sense represent a guilty man? and, in the next place, to suppose that the shedding of its blood could be pleasing to the deity and beneficial to the sinner? But the difficulty reaches a climax when we bear in mind the strong repugnance of the Hindu race to the *taking of life*:[2] for decades of centuries has this been

[1] Perhaps the best way of dealing with such *uncommon* sense as this, is to appeal to the *common* sense of the people around, and, indeed, of the pundit himself; a practical application of the theory in a way which shows its practical untruth is doubtless the best answer. On one occasion a missionary brother, after quietly listening to the above style of argument, without saying a word in reply, snatched the pundit's umbrella out of his hand and walked off with it; the learned pantheist immediately pursued the missionary and demanded the restoration of his property. It was in vain the missionary argued that the whole thing—the umbrella and its abduction—was an illusion; the pundit, amidst the jeers of the crowd, dealt with the case as a stern reality.

[2] More than 2,500 years ago Manu said, 'As many hairs as grow on any animal, so many similar deaths shall one who slays it unnecessarily endure hereafter from birth to birth.'

regarded as a mortal sin; yet side by side with this impression has sacrificial blood been flowing.[1] Put aside the notion of some primæval and authoritative enactment of the institution, and its existence and practice become simply inexplicable; entertain that notion, and no further mystery remains; suppose the ancestors of our race to have been taught, not only the institution, but its design and aim, and we see at once how naturally it gained a footing in the world; then, its retention and transmission, even after its grand design was lost sight of, is only one of ten thousand illustrations of the force of custom and usage in perpetuating meaningless practices.

Certain it is that, so long as we can trace back the religious history of the Indian Aryans, so long do we find the institution of sacrifice amongst them; and it is equally certain that they ever regarded it as of *divine origin*; this idea was with them an assumed and settled principle. Manu, expressing the universal conviction, says, 'By the Self-existent himself were animals created for sacrifice, which was ordained for the welfare of all this universe.'

There is no denying the fact that *human* sacrifice was practised in pre-Vedic times. A peculiar story as illustrating that practice is contained in the Aitareya-brahmana of the Rig-Veda. It runs thus:—

> King Harischandra had no son; he asked
> Great Narada, the sage, 'What benefit
> Comes from a son?' Then Narada replied,
> 'A father by a son clears off a debt,
> In him a self is born from self. The pleasure
> A father has in his own son exceeds

[1] It is true Manu strives to explain the anomaly and meet the difficulty which he clearly felt, by suggesting that, as the institution of sacrifice was from the deity 'therefore the slaughter of animals for sacrifice is no slaughter.' But it is doubtful whether, after all, Manu was satisfied with his own suggestion; it is certain, as, from intercourse with thoughtful Hindus, we are able to certify, that this explanation of the difficulty by no means removes it; repeatedly have they confessed the whole thing to be an enigma which completely puzzles them.

All other pleasures. Food is life, apparel
Is a protection, gold an ornament,
A loving wife the best of friends, a daughter
An object of compassion; but a son
Is like a light sent from the highest heaven.
Go, then, to Varuna, the god, and say,
"Let a son be born, O King, to me,
And I will sacrifice that son to thee."'
This Harischandra did, and thereupon
A son was born to him, called Rohita.
One day the father thus addressed his son:
'I have devoted thee, my son, to him
Who granted thee to me, prepare thyself
For sacrifice to him.' The son said, 'No,'
Then took his bow and left his father's home.
For six long years did Harischandra's son
Roam in the forest; there one day he met
A famished Brahman hermit, Ajigartha,
Half dead with hunger in the wilderness.
The hermit was attended by his wife
And three young sons; then Rohita addressed him:
'O Brahman, I will give a hundred cows
For one of these thy sons.' The father answered,
Folding his arms around his eldest boy,
'I cannot part with him.' The mother then
Clung to her youngest child, and, weeping, said,
'I cannot part with him.' Then Sunahsepha,
Their second son, said, 'Father, I will go.'
So he was purchased for a hundred cows
By Rohita, who forthwith left the forest,
And, taking him to Harischandra, said,
'Father, this boy shall be my substitute.'
Then Harischandra went to Varuna
And prayed, 'Accept this ransom for my son.'
The god replied, 'Let him be sacrificed,
A Brahman is more worthy than a Kshatriya.'

The story goes on to relate how the father of the boy himself bound the intended victim; he then whetted his knife for the execution of the dread deed; before the deadly blow was

struck, the boy called loudly for deliverance to the gods; his prayers prevailed, a divine message granted him a reprieve, and Varuna remitted all further claim on King Harischandra.

That this remarkable story should forcibly bring to mind the Scriptural narrative of the offering of Isaac is but natural; but those who see in the two accounts more than accidental resemblance certainly indent largely on their imagination, for there is not a vestige of evidence to show that the two stories have the remotest connection with each other.

Two interesting points, however, are fairly deducible from this story of Sunahsepha: first, the *date* of the event must be carried back to a very early period, for it manifestly relates to a time when Varuna still commanded undiminished homage; the later eclipse of his glory, of which we spoke before, had not then commenced. The other interesting fact verified by the narrative is that in those primitive times the idea of substitution and vicarious suffering was clearly recognised—understood by men and approved by the Deity.

This leads us to mention other features of the institution of sacrifice as it existed amongst the early Hindus. There seems ground to suppose that *human* sacrifice was the *primitive* characteristic of the institution; after a time animals were substituted for men; these were the horse, the ox, the sheep, and the goat.[1] So prevalent was the practice of sacrifice, that it has been said—and with probable accuracy—that the institution became a more prominent feature of Hinduism than of Judaism.

Yet, though the *practice* of sacrifice pervaded early Hinduism, the *theory* of the thing—the ideas connected with the usage—

[1] A curious legend in the Aitareya-brahmana gives the history of the transition. It states that, as a man was being slain for sacrifice, the part which alone was fit for sacrifice passed from the man into a horse; the horse was then slain, but the essential part again passed from it into an ox; hereupon the ox was killed, when the important part passed into a sheep; from the sheep it passed into a goat. As it remained the longest time in the goat, this animal was regarded as pre-eminently fitted for sacrifice. At the present time thousands of goats are yearly sacrificed at the great shrine of Kali in the city of Calcutta.

obtained a somewhat later development. It is not easy to say how far the Brahmans elaborated *new* ideas, and how far they gave expression to *old* views; but certainly by the time the Aitareya-brahmana was composed (say B.C. 750) the following sentiments prevailed as to the character, design, and effects of the institution:—1. The victim represented and ransomed the offerer. 2. The sacrifice was the means of deliverance from sin and propitiated the gods. 3. It ensured admission to the bliss of heaven. 4. It was important to the success of the sacrifice that it should be offered *in faith.* 5. By a singular fiction of conception it was assumed that identity existed between the victim and the offerer, so that, as it were, it offered itself, being both victim and priest. The following passages illustrate these several points:—'The sacrificer ransomed himself by it.' 'Those who sacrifice remove their sin.' 'He who sacrifices propitiates the gods.' 'Let him who desires heaven sacrifice.' 'By faith the sacrifice is kindled; by faith the offering is offered.' 'The sacrificer is the animal.'

Another important feature might be added to the foregoing. It would seem that the difficulty of supposing an animal to do all that is above expressed suggested the idea of the *presence of the deity* with or in the victim, and this was supposed to render its offering efficacious. In some sense God was offered up to God.[1]

We leave our readers to their own reflections; we shall be greatly surprised if they do not see in all this fresh traces of primæval light and more than glimmerings of great truths. At any rate, few will deny that the existence of such teachings in the sacred books of the Hindus is an encouraging and helpful feature for those whose office it is to proclaim the higher teach-

[1] Vishnu, the second person in the later Triad, is repeatedly spoken of as being present in, and offered up with, the sacrificial victim; he is also said, through the virtue of his sacrifice, to have obtained pre-eminence amongst the gods.

ings of the Gospel in India. Missionaries, if they are wise in their generation, will not fail to turn to valuable account the facts and sentiments above described; they will, as it has been well expressed, 'convert into a fulcrum, for the upheaving of the whole mass of surrounding error,' such fragments of the rock of truth as may be found imbedded in the mythological strata.[1]

[1] *Indian Wisdom*, 4.

CHAPTER IV.

MEDIÆVAL HINDUISM.

'When they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools . . . who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.'—Rom. i. 21, 22, 25.

NOTHING is more difficult than to fix the chronology of the religious history of India. Certain great facts, certain changing phases of conviction and sentiment, are sufficiently discernible; but the difficulty is to relegate those facts and phases to their proper periods, and so illustrate their natural sequence and mutual dependence. The truth of the matter seems to be that, various and numerous as have been the systems which have flourished in different eras, none of them came suddenly to the birth; instead of sharply-defined steps of transition, you rather find system fading into system as do the colours of the rainbow; as in that natural phenomenon you perceive several rays individually distinct, yet strangely blending one with another, so is it with the systems we speak of; in certain features they may differ materially, but in other respects they blend and harmonise; some of them may seem to be mutually antagonistic, but on a closer observation you find that they are really supplemental one to the other. They all, moreover, have a common parentage; it may probably be said with truth that every system of religion or philosophy which has figured in India for the last twenty-five centuries has had its germ or seed-plant in the teaching of the Vedas.

We have already seen abundant evidence of deep religious feeling in the early Hindus; a sense of need and helplessness, a consciousness of sin, and an undefined dread of its consequences, a yearning after knowledge of the unseen and eternal, a desire to account for the origin and tendency of things—these principles, operating differently on different minds, gave rise to various currents of thought and speculation which ultimately found their expression in the varied systems of succeeding ages. In every case some devout breathing or some doctrinal enunciation of the Vedas formed the basis of the conception.

It cannot be denied that the later developments of Hinduism bore a more sensuous aspect than its earliest characteristics; in this respect we may trace undoubted evidences of declension and deterioration; but, at the same time, a higher and deeper principle was at work—was not that principle an effort to get nearer to God, and to bring God nearer to man? Already in Vedic times the Hindus had striven to realise God in His works; they had ended in deifying and worshipping nature. But no idea of divine incarnation seems to have occurred to them; this was the next step; it was something to see God in illimitable space and the starry heavens, better still to discern Him in the fructifying showers and the genial heat of the sun, but best of all to trace Him as *one with ourselves*—able to share our joys and sorrows, and sympathise with our infirmities. That unenlightened man, though prompted by a true instinct in seeking after closer union with God, was all the while receding further and further from Him, affords one of the strongest evidences of human helplessness and ignorance and of the need of a divine revelation. Man could conceive the idea of a divine incarnation, but when he set himself to realise the idea, he produced deities more sensual and depraved than himself. The conception of God manifest in the flesh, in some form or other, meets one everywhere; but, outside the pages of the New Testament, we search in vain for a worthy illustration of the grand idea—an

illustration, that is, which is honouring to God and helpful to man.

In our last chapter we assumed B.C. 1200 to be about the date of the compilation of the Rig-Veda; we may now suppose four or five centuries to have passed over since that; all the while, changes—social, religious, and philosophical—have been slowly developing. Caste distinctions have been gathering strength and consolidation; the lordly Brahmans have been growing in power and importance; through their influence a wide-spread sacerdotalism and a complicated ritual have supplanted the simpler aspects of primitive Hinduism. Old Vedic deities are lapsing into oblivion, whilst new and strange gods take their place; a tendency to hero-worship is beginning to show itself; pantheistic thought and polytheistic practice are increasing on every hand; although the infallibility of Vedic teaching is universally held, yet rationalistic speculations are beginning to be heard—speculations which, in their very nature, struck at the authority of the holy books and prepared the way for the Atheistic revolt of Buddhism.

It was about this period that the later Hindu Triad, to which reference has already been made, came into prominence. Of the three deities, Brahmā, Vishnu, Siva, only the *second* is mentioned in the Rig-Veda; Vishnu appears in the Vedic system as an inferior deity, but as in some way connected with or representing the sun. The name of Siva occurs, but only as an adjective; the meaning of the word is 'auspicious' or 'gracious,' and it is applied as an epithet of Rudra, the god of storms; there is very little doubt this Vedic deity furnished the ideal of Siva, the Destroyer. It is less easy to trace the origin of the first name in the Triad. Some think it originated from the word 'Brahman,' which means prayer or religious ordinance; this idea was actually deified under the term Brahmanaspati, the lord or god of prayer. The name of Brahmā may have been thus derived; and, as he was the deity principally worshipped

by the Brahmans, it is highly probable they called themselves after him.

The root, however, from which this word comes is *brih*, to expand or increase. It is important to note this circumstance, as it really involves the primordial conception out of which this later form of Hinduism took its rise. Pantheism had already permeated the notions of Hindu sages; they had come to conceive of God as an all-pervading Essence, a universally-diffused Substance. They spoke of his Being or Substance in the neuter as Brahmăn (nom. Brahmă). This denoted 'simple infinite being,' or the 'one eternal Essence.' This Brahmă, this sole-existing Entity, ultimately assumed the quality of activity; he became the personal, masculine Brahmā; in this character he created the phenomena of the universe; thus, Brahmā, the first person of the Triad, appears as the Creator. The progress of self-evolution next resulted in the appearance of Vishnu, as the Preserver of the new creation. The third manifestation of Brahmă was in the character of Siva, the Destroyer. The pervading idea of this whole conception is evidently this—for certain reasons the one universal Spirit has assumed this triple manifestation; but, as he is the only real existing essence, so those temporary manifestations will ultimately yield to the law of dissolution, and be merged again into Brahmă, the one simple, all-embracing Entity.

Our readers may be curious to know how the ideas of evolution, creation, preservation, and destruction could co-exist with the doctrine of pantheism; the natural impression is that if all being be identical with the one great Unity, and if there be nothing external to him, then those ideas must be excluded. The Hindu sages found a solution of this problem in the theory of *emanation*. They maintained that everything which exists or seems to exist is but an outgoing of the Great Self-existent—a peculiar form or development of his existence. The Upanishads contain several ingenious illustrations of this idea; we

read, 'As the web issues from the spider; as from a living man the hairs of his head and body spring forth, and as little sparks shoot forth from the fire, so from the One Soul proceed all breathing animals, all worlds, all the gods, and all beings.' Similarly, as the spider can at pleasure receive back the threads which he has given out, so will the great Spirit finally gather up into himself all the elements of which his various manifestations consist.

Such is the *philosophy* of the thing; but our readers will be quite prepared to learn that the common people left such metaphysical conceptions to the pundits and insisted upon grasping as substantial and abiding realities what their teachers regarded as visionary and transient appearances. In truth, not in India only, but in all civilised nations of antiquity, religion has ever borne two aspects—it has been one thing to the learned few, another thing to the illiterate many; the learned classes have ever claimed a monopoly of the deeper truths, whilst the ignorant have been left to amuse themselves with their popular errors. Christianity alone presents but one aspect to all classes alike, it alone is the same thing to Jew and Gentile, Greek and barbarian, bond and free.

Still, it must not be imagined that the learned classes in India were heedless of and unaffected by the popular aspect of Hinduism; nay, they actually helped forward and supported the popular developments of the national creed, and this, not necessarily on sinister grounds. *Intellectually* they were philosophers, metaphysicians, pantheists; but they were not—could not be, *coldly* speculative; the strong religious instinct, the deep spiritual yearnings, which constitute such a marked characteristic of their whole race, breathed within them—struggled for expression and sought for satisfaction. It was a case in which the *heart* was better, or stronger, than the *head*; what the logic of the latter avowed was fanciful and vain, the hunger of the former was fain to devour as real and substantial.

We are convinced that this consideration furnishes the only clue to a right understanding of the seeming anomaly, the contemporaneous development of pantheïsm and polytheism. Logically these were mutually destructive, but viewed *psychologically*, they were correlative and equally necessary.

The theological systems which grew out of and clustered around the above conception of the divine Triad abundantly illustrate this remark. The first person of the Trinity, Brahmā, though originally the favourite deity of the Brahmans, gradually fell into the shade; his work as the Creator was accomplished when he called all things into being; henceforth he was felt to have little to do with the world, or the world with him. Accordingly, his worship fell into desuetude.[1] On the other hand, Vishnu, to whom the work of preserving the new creation had been delegated, naturally rose into prominence and became the main object of national homage and devotion. It is in his character of Vishnu that the supreme Being draws nearest to man, and evinces his tenderest sympathies with man's sorrows, woes, and wants; it is as Vishnu the one great Spirit assumes a visible embodiment—becomes incarnate, first in the lower animals, but ultimately in human form, and always with some beneficent design, always to bring some good or banish some evil. Vishnu was to pass through ten incarnations; nine of these have already been accomplished, the tenth is still an event of the future. The following is a brief sketch of the past incarnations:—

1. The first opens with the picture of a universal deluge. This Flood had swept away all mankind excepting eight persons; these were the seventh Manu,[2] the progenitor of the human race,

[1] At the present day there is only one spot in India where any traces of the worship of Brahmā are to be found; that is at Pushkara in Ajmir.

[2] This is not the Manu who is the reputed author of the Code. The compiler of the Institutes is spoken of as the grandson of Brahmā; he is clearly a mythical personage; the probabilities are that, not one, but many learned hands were employed in the compilation of those literary treasures which go by the title of the 'Institutes of Manu.'

and seven holy sages. Manu had conciliated the Supreme Being by his austerities and devotion in an age of universal depravity. To save him and his friends Vishnu took the form of fish, and instructed Manu to build a ship; he was to take on board this ship the seven sages, and the seeds of all existing things. During the prevalence of the Flood, the divine fish ever directed the course of the ship, nor left it until the vessel was safely moored to the peak of a lofty mountain. The following extract from the Satapalha-brahmana illustrates the story:—

Along the ocean in that stately ship was borne the lord of men, and through
Its dancing, tumbling billows, and its roaring waters; and the bark,
Tossed to and fro by violent winds, reeled on the surface of the deep,
Staggering and trembling like a drunken woman. Land was seen no more,
Nor far horizon, nor the space between; for everywhere around
Spread the wild waste of waters, reeking atmosphere, and boundless sky.
And now, when all the world was deluged, nought appeared above the waves
But Manu and the seven sages, and the fish that drew the bark.
Unwearied thus for years on years the fish propelled the ship across
The heaped-up waters, till at length it bore the vessel to the peak
Of Himavan; then, softly smiling, thus the fish addressed the sage:
'Haste now to bind thy ship to this high crag. Know me Lord of all,
The Great Creator Brahmā,[1] mightier than all might—omnipotent.
By me in fish-like shape hast thou been saved in dire emergency.'[2]

[1] In the Bhagavata-purana the fish is described as an incarnation of Vishnu; such he really was; that it is here spoken of as an appearance of Brahmā may perhaps be explained by the fact that in the Shasters, not unfrequently, an interchange both of offices and names takes place among the several members of the divine Triad.

[2] The resemblance between the above story and the narrative of the Flood in the Book of Genesis can hardly be called fanciful or accidental. As there is no ground whatever for supposing that the Mosaic account ever found its way to India, the most reasonable hypothesis must surely be that each account is an independent narrative describing a real historical event. This inference is all the

2. The next incarnation of Vishnu represents him as assuming the form of a tortoise. Amrita (nectar) had been lost in the Flood along with a number of other sacred things; the design of this incarnation was the recovery of these objects.

3. The third incarnation also relates to the Flood. A terrible demon, called Hiranyaksha, had seized the world and submerged it. Vishnu, on this occasion, took the form of a boar; he descended to the abyss; for a thousand years he was engaged in a deadly conflict with the monster; at length he slew him, and uplifted the earth above the waters. Other accounts say that the Vedas were lost in the Flood, and Vishnu, as the divine boar, sought for and recovered them.

4. Another formidable demon, named Hiranya-Kasipu, tyrannised over the world; his power was almost unbounded; he had appropriated all the sacrifices made to the gods. He had, however, a pious son, called Prahlada, who was a devoted worshipper of Vishnu; the tyrant resolved to slay his son on account of his devotion; but, as he was attempting to destroy him, Vishnu appeared in the form of a man-lion—half man and half lion—and tore the monster to pieces.

more reasonable when we find traditions of the Flood amongst almost all nations, whether civilised or barbarous, whether holding intercourse with other races, or utterly shut up within themselves. Thus we find that not only the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Hindus possess these traditions: you trace them everywhere—even where you would least expect to find them. We find, for instance, the Chinese telling of a flood which occurred in the days of Fah-He, the founder of Chinese civilisation; the story states that he alone, with his three sons and three daughters, escaped, and that from them the world was repeopled. The natives of the South Sea Islands tell how Taarsa, the chief god, submerged the world, when a man escaped in a canoe to Tiatarpua, and there erected an altar in honour of the god. The Fiji islanders also tell of a flood from which only eight persons escaped. When we go to the New World the same feature presents itself. The Cherotte Indians speak of the destruction of mankind by a flood, from which but one family was saved by taking refuge in a boat. The ancient Mexicans left paintings in which a flood is seen; a man and woman are observed in a boat near a mountain, whilst a dove is hovering about them. Indeed, it has been ascertained that, in putting together the various traditions on the subject, every particular in the history given by Moses is reproduced. It is no wonder, therefore, that even sceptics are coming to admit that, after all, there must have been a historical basis for such world-wide traditions.

5. The next time Vishnu descended for the deliverance of the world was during the reign of the demon Bali. He had gained control over the three worlds (heaven, earth, and hell). On this occasion Vishnu triumphed by a trick; he very literally 'stole a march' upon Bali. He presented himself before that powerful oppressor in the form of a dwarf, and humbly begged as much land as he could pass over at three steps. Bali no sooner granted his request than he enlarged his form to such dimensions that at two steps alone he embraced the whole of heaven and earth; he, however, left *Patala*, hell, in the demon's possession. There is little doubt that the germ of this conception is to be found in the Rig-Veda. As has been said, Vishnu there figures as the sun; and as such he is spoken of as striding over the universe in three steps.

6. The sixth incarnation clearly points to a fact which has been before alluded to, that struggles for power and dominion took place between the Brahmans and Kshatriyas. Vishnu appeared as Parasu-Rama, armed with an axe; he came as the hero of the Brahmans, and is said to have swept off their foes on twenty-one occasions.

7. The last incarnation clearly rests on some historical basis; such is the case with the one we are now going to describe. The earliest of the two Indian epics, the Ramayan, contains the story of this incarnation. The date of this popular and interesting poem has been variously estimated. Professor Monier Williams fixes, on very strong internal evidence, the period of its composition as not later than 500 B.C.[1] The substratum of history on which the legendary superstructure has been reared may readily be traced; the Aryans, after possessing themselves of the Gangetic valley, began to urge their way southwards into the peninsula of India.[2] As they

[1] *Indian Wisdom*, p. 315.

[2] There seems reason to believe that, long before the Aryans undertook military operations against the south, Hinduism had been introduced to that part of the

advanced, they naturally encountered much opposition from the powerful pre-Aryan tribes who were in possession of the land. The chief obstacle to their success was the existence of a chieftain of extraordinary courage and prowess, named Ravana; this tyrant, as king of Ceylon, not only ruled over that island, but spread devastation far and wide on the continent of India. This circumstance naturally gave scope to and evoked the heroism of the Aryan invaders. They formed alliances with some of the oppressed rulers of southern India; especially did they allure to their ranks vast hordes of wild aborigines inhabiting the Vindhya and neighbouring hills. Amongst the Aryan leaders, Rama, the son of Dasaratha, king of Ayodhya (Oude), stood forth pre-eminent for manly virtue and dauntless courage. After a terrific and prolonged struggle he succeeded in overthrowing and slaying his formidable opponent. Gratitude for deliverance, admiration of heroism, self-sacrifice, and endurance, amongst a race of ardent temperament and lively religious instincts, would be sure to exaggerate the simple story; ere long the arts of the Muse were displayed in adorning the

country. A number of religious devotees seem to have wandered southwards and there settled down as hermits; the example of their asceticism and devotion doubtless impressed their less civilised neighbours. In this way the Hindu element found an entrance into South India; in its progress it, to a great extent, obliterated the ruder systems which had preceded it, though it also made some important accretions from them. It is a very common, but an *erroneous* opinion that missionary zeal and aggressive enterprise are utterly foreign to Hinduism. In point of fact, the Brahmans have carried on missionary operations from time immemorial, and with very marked success too; they are still propagating their creed amongst the descendants of the aborigines. Self-interest may probably be the leading motive of the Brahman missionary; his chief aim is to make disciples, who, as a matter of course, contribute to his support. A Brahman will thus turn up at some out-of-the-way village; he will settle down at the place, erect a simple shrine, and with an air of great sanctity and devotion go through his rites from day to day. All the while he is getting a name; the simpl villagers look upon him as 'some great one;' he distributes among them charms and spells, makes for them astrological calculations, tells them their village god is only another form of the greater deities of the Hindus; he offers to teach them the 'more excellent way,' he ultimately divides the community into different castes, and forthwith stands confessed their spiritual lord and guide.

narrative; rapidly the skeleton of fact was filled up with legendary marvels, until the whole account passed into the region of the supernatural; Ravana became a demon stronger than the gods, Rama an incarnation of the omnipotent Vishnu; whilst the diminutive and active hill-men who formed his auxiliaries, appear in the scene as veritable monkeys.[1]

The following is a sketch of the story as it is told in the Ramayan. King Dasaratha had three wives, but none of them had borne him a son; in his anxiety to procure this most desirable boon, he had recourse to the most solemn and potent of all religious rites—the sacrifice of a horse. The ceremony is successful, and Dasaratha obtains from Brahmā, Vishnu and Siva a promise of four sons. In the meantime a deputation of the inferior deities wait upon Brahmā and crave his assistance against the ruthless Ravana; they complain that this monster menaces the universe with destruction, and none of them are able to cope with him. Ravana had, in fact, through the virtue of his austerities, received from Brahmā an assurance that neither gods, genii, nor demons of any kind should be able to overcome him. He had, however, never dreamed that danger could accrue to him from *man*; he therefore scorned to ask protection from mankind. This left him vulnerable on

[1] Nothing is more singular than the varied aspects which hero-worship has assumed in India. Two of the most curious instances have occurred within our own time, and in each case the deity honoured is a departed European. Some 60 or 70 years ago an Englishman in South India gained a dubious reputation as being something more than human on the ground of his intemperate habits; this, combined with his violence towards the natives, impressed them with the idea that he was an incarnate demon. We believe to this day numbers of people perform propitiatory rites at his tomb; the emblems of the deceased hero are *a brandy bottle and a tobacco pipe!*

The other case is that of the brave and noble Brigadier Nicholson. This excellent officer held a civil appointment before the Mutiny broke out; he afterwards fell at the storming of Delhi; but when the tidings reached the simple people over whom he had before ruled they refused to believe in his death. By his urbane and genial and Christian deportment, he had so won upon their affection and veneration that they declared he was a god and not a man, and so, seeing him no more, they began to worship him as the god *Nikkil Seyn.*

one side; pride thus proved his ruin—he had despised man; by a Divine man was he to be vanquished. Vishnu, at the request of the gods, consented to become incarnate in the family of Dasaratha. According to promise, four sons were born to this monarch; Vishnu distributed himself in unequal portions amongst them. The eldest, Rama, possessed half the nature of Vishnu, Bharata inherited one quarter, whilst the remaining quarter was divided between the twins, Lakshmana and Satrughna. Rama was married to the beautiful and devoted Sita, and, some time after, King Dasaratha made preparations for the inauguration of Rama as his successor. Kaikeyi, the mother of Bharata, had all along been jealous of the preference shown by her husband for Rama; she determined to frustrate the purpose of the king as to the succession of his firstborn, and to secure the throne for her own son. Some years before, the King had, in accordance with a well-known Eastern custom, rewarded an act of devotion on her part by promising to fulfil any request she might make. She had deferred the request until a seasonable opportunity should present itself; such an opportunity had come; accordingly she demanded the fulfilment of the royal pledge. Her petition was—that Rama should be banished for fourteen years, and that Bharata should succeed to the throne.

This strange request fell like a thunder-bolt upon King Dasaratha; indeed, it may be said to have broken his heart, for from that moment he pined away and never again rallied; but the sanctity of the pledge was inviolable, the dread sentence was given, and steps were at once taken for carrying it into effect.

From this point onward, some of the brightest and loveliest traits of character that we ever met with are depicted. We know of no other story in which filial, fraternal, and conjugal affection stand forth in such charming and bold relief. It is impossible to read the narrative of such pure and unselfish love without being touched and impressed thereby—impossible,

moreover, not to feel that such beautiful conceptions, so admirably expressed, are indicative alike of a high moral tone and great poetic talent. The picture shows us the crushing grief of Dasaratha as he communicates the terrible story to his darling child; but, strange to say, it shows the son much less moved than the father; Rama's cause of distress is, not that he has lost a throne, not for the personal privation and suffering which await him, but for the misery which all this will entail upon those he will leave behind him. He contemplates with agonising tenderness the woes of his bereaved parents and his deserted wife; but he controls his own emotions, and becomes the soothing counsellor of the distressed family; he reminds them of the duty of calmly submitting to the decrees of fate; he even exonerates Kaikeyi from all blame, and reverently salutes her at the time of leaving. But Rama was not to go into exile unattended; the gentle, the pure, the devoted Sita resolves at any cost to accompany her lord; in vain does Rama entreat her to remain; in vain does he point to her soft and delicate frame, and depict the hardships and horrors of a wandering life in the forests. Sita is unmoved—nay, the tale of woe only makes her more resolute to share her husband's peril, and minister to his consolation. She says:—

A wife must share her husband's fate, my duty is to follow thee
Where'er thou goest. Apart from thee, I would not dwell in heaven itself.
Deserted by her lord, a wife is like a miserable corpse.
Close as thy shadow would I cleave to thee in this life and hereafter.
Thou art my king, my guide, my only refuge, my divinity.
It is my fixed resolve to follow thee. If thou must wander forth
Through thorny trackless forest, I will go before thee, treading down
The prickly brambles to make smooth thy path. Walking before thee, I
Shall feel no weariness; the forest-thorns will seem like silken robes;

The bed of leaves, a couch of down. To me the shelter of thy presence
Is better far than stately palaces, and paradise itself.
Protected by thy arm, gods, demons, men shall have no power to harm me.
With thee I'll live contentedly on roots and fruits; sweet or not sweet,
If given by thy hand, they will be to me like the food of life.
Roaming with thee in desert wastes, a thousand years will be a day;
Dwelling with thee, e'en hell itself would be to me a heaven of bliss.

Rama at length yields to Sita's importunity and takes her along with him. Lakshmana, one of his brothers, with noble self-sacrifice and singular fraternal devotion, insists upon sharing their trials and aiding in the protection of Sita, whom he reverenced as deeply as he earnestly loved.

Soon after, the broken-hearted Dasaratha died, and the Ministers of State assembled to instal Bharata in the vacant throne. Here again a charming picture of unselfish virtue presents itself. Bharata had all along deplored the conduct of his mother, and had quietly resolved never to accept the dignity she had, in so exceptionable a way, procured for him. He assured the ministers his purpose was to set forth with a body of troops in search of Rama; having found him, he would send him back to the capital; whilst he himself, as his substitute, would fulfil the fourteen years of exile. Bharata is successful in his search, but utterly fails in his object; Rama is touched by the generous devotion of his brother, but unshaken in his determination to complete his period of banishment. Hereupon a Brahman, named Javali, follows up Bharata's entreaties by a train of reasoning designed to convince Rama that he might comply with his brother's request with a good conscience. Rama returned to the Brahman's arguments the following noble reply: 'There is nothing greater than truth; and truth should be esteemed the most sacred of all things. The Vedas have their sole foundation in

truth. Having promised obedience to my father's commands, I will neither through covetousness, nor forgetfulness, nor blind ignorance, break down the barrier of truth.' Rama dismissed his brother with his blessing, he especially urged him to guard against a feeling of anger towards her who had been the cause of these troubles. 'Cherish,' said he, 'thy mother Kaikeyi; show no resentment towards her.'

For ten years Rama had no certain dwelling-place, with his wife and brother he wandered about in the forests, subsisting on the fruits and roots which they found and the deer which they shot; the bark of the trees supplied them with clothing. When they travelled, Rama led the way, Sita followed, and Lakshmana brought up the rear. Very beautiful and simple is the story of their daily life; and one feature runs throughout it—their morning and evening devotions were never omitted. After ten years had passed over, they made their way to the hermitage of the Sage Agastya, near the Vindhya mountains. On his advice they betook themselves to the neighbourhood of the Godavari. This whole district was infested with evil spirits; here it was that Rama came in contact with Surpa-nakha, the sister of Ravana, the demon-king of Ceylon. Surpa-nakha conceived an ardent passion for Rama, and strove by various arts to captivate his affections; Rama repelled her approaches and turned to his beloved Sita. Enraged at this disappointment, the sister of Ravana sought an opportunity to revenge herself on Sita; but the faithful Lakshmana came to the rescue, and, in his ire, cut off the ears and nose of Surpa-nakha. This circumstance brings Ravana into the field; his sister lays before him the story of her injuries and claims vengeance at his hands; in order to add zest to his movements and inflame his desire, she informed her brother of the matchless beauty of Sita. Ravana sets forth fully resolved to possess himself of the lovely prize; by a skilful device, he comes upon Sita at a moment when she is alone, and forcibly carries her off to his island home. Once

there, he tries to charm her with the glories of his capital and the prospect of boundless luxury and bliss, if only she will be his queen. She indignantly spurns him, and is, accordingly, handed over to the charge of a body of female furies, who alternately cajole and torment her in order to subjugate her to Ravana's wishes. She is ready to perish in an agony of despair; but Brahmā sends her sleep and celestial refreshment.

Then follows the story of the arduous toils and terrific conflict undertaken by Rama for the deliverance of his beloved wife. Victory crowns his efforts; the monster is slain, and he once more looks on the face of Sita. Here the narrative assumes a strange and peculiar aspect; Rama, instead of clasping his wife to his bosom, regards her with an air of coldness; Sita bursts into tears and exclaims: 'Alas! my husband!' Rama then tells her that he had avenged his honour by slaying the demon, but that, contaminated as she must be, he cannot again receive her as his wife. Hereupon, Sita, in a touching and dignified manner, asserts her purity, and calls upon Lakshmana to prepare for her the fiery test which would prove her innocence; she passes unscathed through the flames; Agni, the god of fire, presents her to Rama, who, on his part, joyfully embraces her, and declares that he never doubted her innocence, and only allowed her to pass through the ordeal so as for ever to silence the suspicions of the world.

Shortly after, Rama, having completed the period of his exile, proceeds in a flying chariot through the air to Ayodhya; on the way, he points out to Sita the different scenes of their adventures as they pass over them, and recounts the strange story of their sufferings and trials.

But—happy thought!—the trials are over, the glory and bliss are to come. Rama is crowned with grandeur and pomp amidst the universal acclamations of his subjects, and henceforth he commences a glorious and beneficent reign.[1]

[1] We feel the later chapters of the Ramayan, which bring another cloud over

8. Vishnu became incarnate the eighth time as Krishna. This is said to have taken place at the end of the Dvapara, or third age of the world.[1] The object of this incarnation was the destruction of Kansa, King of Mathura, a tyrant corresponding in malevolence and power to the formidable King of Ceylon who was vanquished by Rama. The story of Krishna is contained in the Mahabharat, the second epic, and in certain Puranas. There can be no doubt that this is by far the most popular of all the incarnations; Krishna's exploits, his miracles, his amours, his tricks, are household words throughout the length and breadth of India. ''Tis pity and pity 'tis 'tis true—' but there is no disguising the fact that the one incarnation of Vishnu which shows that deity as revelling in boundless licentiousness is dearer to the millions of India than any other. No more saddening thought than this can be dwelt upon, and

Rama and Sita may well be omitted; they are undoubtedly additions to the primitive story, and rather detract from than increase its beauty and symmetry.

Should any of our readers be *given to* allegorising, they may probably find ample scope for their talents in the above story. For their encouragement we may state that there are intelligent and well-educated native Christians in India who see in this whole narrative an outline of the Gospel story. They behold in Dasaratha the Father of all; in Rama, the Son of His love; in the exile, the sojourn of Jesus in this wilderness of sin; in Ravana, the enemy of God and man; in Sita, the Church; in Rama's struggles on her behalf, the bitter conflict of the Redeemer for the deliverance of his spouse; in the final triumph and glorious reign of Rama, the coming triumph of Christ's spiritual kingdom. We mention this view rather as a curiosity than to endorse it; those who are strong enough in faith or fancy may receive it; we are more than doubtful on the subject. If, as we assume, the story above was current in India long before the advent of Christ, one has to *make believe* very hard indeed to suppose it contains such a marvellous anticipation of the whole scheme of man's redemption.

[1] This is really no guide as to the actual chronology of Krishna's history; as, however, the incarnation of Rama is said to have taken place in the Treta or *second* age of the world, it is clear that a considerable interval is assumed as having existed between the seventh and eighth incarnations of Vishnu. As the Romans spoke of the golden, silver, brazen, and iron ages of the world, so have the Hindus divided time into four mundane periods. The first, or the Satya-Yuga, was an age of innocence and happiness; throughout the second and third ages the world is said to have been gradually deteriorating; the latest and the worst age is the one in which we are living; it is the Kali-Yuga, or the *dark* age. It is reckoned to have commenced 3102 B.C.

nothing more is needed to show the terrible declension in tone which, in the lapse of ages, has come over the people. It is a shame even to speak of the things which Krishna unblushingly practised; yet Hindoos of both sexes recount the foul narrative not only without shame, but with positive fervour and devotion. The study of Krishna's character has, doubtless, accelerated the moral deterioration which prepared the way for its conception. The effect has been to extinguish, to a great extent, the moral sense. The people will not deny that if a mere man were to do the deeds attributed to Krishna he would be an object of aversion, but as Krishna is a god he could do no wrong, indeed his debaucheries do but illustrate his liberty and might! So say those who accept his history in all its literal grossness; multitudes, however, it is refreshing to state, shrink from the literal interpretation; they see in the most indelicate details deep spiritual metaphors and profound mysteries. It is hardly necessary to state that among that large body of educated natives who by various influences have lost their faith in the national creed, no apologist of Krishna is to be met with. He is given up as hopelessly bad, even as a historical character. But, in truth, the worst parts of his character are comparatively modern additions to the original story. In the Mahabharat he merely appears as a great chief aiding the Pandavas in their struggle with the Kurus; his claims to deification in that great epic are very dubious. The prurient portions of his history grew up like sickly excrescences around his true story, and as these gratified the popular taste of a degenerate age, they were ultimately incorporated with the narrative of the incarnation.[1]

[1] The famous Juggernath (Lord of the World), whose temple at Pcorea in Orissa is the shrine to which hundreds of thousands of pilgrims yearly wend their weary way, is another form of Krishna. Nothing could be more hideous than this uncouth, armless idol, seated on his huge car; yet millions of hearts beat with devotion towards this Indian Moloch; and to gain a sight of him countless multitudes will travel hundreds of miles, thousands of them dying unpitied and unaided on the road-side.

9. In the next incarnation Vishnu appeared as Buddha. This took place in the fourth age of the world—the present dispensation. It might seem strange that Vishnu should be represented as appearing in the form of the deadly enemy of the Brahmans, the atheistical opponent of Hinduism. Some think the Brahmans, seeing the immense popularity which Buddhism obtained in India, hit upon this conception as a likely mode of conciliating, and bringing about a reconciliation with, their adversaries. The Brahmans themselves say that Vishnu's object was, by assuming a heretical form, to delude the demons to destruction; they would be led by means of this incarnation to desist from worshipping the true gods, and would perish in consequence.

10. The tenth incarnation is still *in the future.* It is to take place when the world has become hopelessly depraved. Its object will be the final destruction of wickedness and the re-establishment of righteousness and peace in the earth. The Satya-Yuga, the age of purity and innocence, will be restored. Some accounts, singularly enough, state that Vishnu will on this last occasion appear in the sky, seated on a white horse, resplendent as a comet, with a drawn sword in his hand.

The character and worship of Siva, the third person in the Hindu Triad, present features totally distinct from those of Vishnu; indeed, as we shall see hereafter, each of these deities represents a separate and distinct principle, they illustrate lines of thought and religious feeling, mutually opposed, yet severally necessary, each having its origin and support in the pantheistic element which pervades every Hindu system. Before pointing out these distinctive features and principles, it will materially help the reader if we give some idea of the schools of philosophy which grew up, side by side, with the post-Vedic theology of which we are treating.

There were six of those schools, exemplifying as many philosophical systems; though in reality these may be resolved into

three pairs, the *Nyaya*, the *Sankhya*, and the *Vedanta*. Any reader who is curious to see the principles of logic on which those ancient sages reasoned, the metaphysical disputations in which they engaged, and the speculations in which they indulged —speculations which, in many respects, are closely akin to those put forth by certain European philosophers in our own day—may at his leisure study these interesting points. As our object is to deal only with the religious side of the question, we will merely give an epitome of those great leading principles which were evolved or upheld by the several schools, and which ultimately reflected themselves in the religious systems of the country.

On two important points all the schools were agreed—first, that 'nothing comes from nothing,' *ex nihilo nihil fit*, or, as a Hindu philosopher would put it, 'an entity cannot be produced out of a nonentity.' The other point of agreement was the doctrine of transmigration of souls. This idea is not found in the Rig-Veda; the early Hindus believed in the immortality of the soul, and looked to an eternal state in which rewards or punishments would be distributed. The later Hindus retained a belief in heaven and hell—Manu, indeed, speaks of twenty-one hells—but they maintained that, at some period or other, the soul must return to earth and be again clothed with a mortal body; its condition being one of suffering or of enjoyment according to the proportion of merit or demerit which marked it in its previous births.

The first of those two important axioms the Hindus held in common with the ancient Grecian and Roman philosophers; but it is curious to note the different inferences which the Indian and European sages respectively grounded upon it. The latter, for the most part, seem to have reasoned out the origin of the universe thus; there is some Being, or intelligent Essence, by whose power and volition things have come into their present shape; but He could not form the universe out of nothing,

therefore there must have been a pre-existent, primordial substance, a sort of raw material, out of which he evolved the present order of things; some affirmed this primitive substance to be water, others air, others fire, others again said it consisted of all these elements together. Whether they actually believed in the eternal existence of this substance or not is doubtful. As regards the Hindu sages the pantheistic leaven had already moulded their conceptions; accordingly, the prevailing idea of their philosophy is that the primordial substance and the Creator are one and the same. Some of them, indeed, (those of the Sankhya school) seem hardly to have recognised a sentient and intelligent Author of nature; they did not deny the existence of soul (Purusha) but with them *Prakriti*, eternally-existent matter (or element), non-sentient yet prolific, was at once the source and the author of the present state of things. Their views appear to be reiterated in the theories of certain materialists of the present day. Others again—those of the Vedanta school—taught the doctrine that the One Great Soul, the self-existent Entity, alone existed, that he had eternally existed, and that *out of* him and *by* him the universe had come into being. This school comprised two sections; one of these held the reality of the visible universe, they said it was a real emanation of the substance of the Deity; the other maintained that the universe was merely an illusory appearance (maya), without any real and substantial existence at all. This latter theory was ever the more prevalent of the two, and it is at the present day the most popular with the learned class. The Nyaya philosophy seems to have taught the actual existence of the Supreme Soul; but it does not represent him as the Creator; it attributes the present order of things to a fortuitous concurrence of innumerable eternal atoms.

Arising out of the above conceptions of the Great Entity or the Supreme Soul, the *eternity of human souls* was a point of universal agreement. This followed as a matter of course. We,

as Christians, hold the soul of man to be immortal and everlasting, but *not eternal*, because it was created; but to the Hindu philosopher human souls were but portions or emanations of the One Supreme and All-pervading Soul; they were never called into being, accordingly the attribute of eternity belonged to them equally with their great Source.

But, it was argued, pure soul can only exercise thought, and realise consciousness, sensation, volition, when endued with some bodily form and joined to *mind*. It needs these as instruments for the conveyance of impressions as food for thought and sense.[1] Thus the Supreme Soul has allied itself through successive ages to various objects and forms, now becoming the masculine Brahmā as Creator, then Vishnu and Siva; anon appearing in the shape of inferior deities or in the form of man.

The soul at the hour of death, though severed from the body, is not merged into the Supreme Soul, for it actually retains a bodily covering. This is an interior and subtle body, quite distinct from the gross material body which death dissolves. This invisible body attends the soul during its sojourn in heaven and hell and accompanies it throughout the numerous transmigrations which await it.

This continued conscious existence of the soul involves on its part continued action; these actions, as they are good or bad, involve merit or demerit; this again involves reward or punishment; but, as a due proportion of these are not awarded in the heaven or hell to which the soul may go, its return to earth in other bodies becomes necessary; all the while a debtor and creditor account is registered; thus the sufferings of the present life are the inevitable penalty of the demerit of a former life, on the other hand, the enjoyments of life are a recompense for previous good desert.[2]

[1] Accordingly, mind is often spoken of as *Antah-Karana*, internal organ or instrument.

[2] The practical developments of this theory among the people of India are curious and often painful to behold. As we elsewhere remarked, this notion goes

Were the moral account entered in the ledger of Fate a stationary one, its liquidation would be a simple matter of time; but the soul, so long as it is endued with the body, must go on performing fresh actions, these again accumulate fresh merit and demerit, and thus, prolonged existence and manifold transmigrations follow as a matter of course.

But the constitution of things being what it is, continued existence means continuous disquiet and suffering; rest, satisfaction, and security can never be enjoyed; on the one hand, all evil action is sure to entail its due punishment in the miseries of life; on the other, a person who, by persistence in well-doing, has merited a reward, may by some moral slip again be plunged into misery and degradation. Consequently emancipation from all conscious existence is the *summum bonum* to which every individual should aspire; the release of his soul from all contact with body and mind should be his constant effort. The soul, thus released, loses at once its consciousness and individuality, and is merged into the one Supreme Soul of the universe. Such is the ultimate prospect of rest which Hinduism

far towards destroying sympathy and fellow-feeling; whatever distresses a person may endure, they are regarded as the just and necessary consequence of his misconduct in a former birth. 'Why,' says the Hindu, 'should I disconcert myself about the inevitable? and why should I, by trying to lessen suffering, interfere with Fate's stern and just decrees?' In the same way no credit is accorded to the man who, by a course of industry and virtue, improves his position and raises his social standing; this, again, is merely the inevitable recompense of the virtues of a previous birth. But this theory exercises a pernicious moral influence too; a man may be ever so vicious—a thief, a murderer, but why censure him? he was fated to be what he is: he may be ever so moral and upright, ever so kind and benevolent; but why commend him? he was doomed to be such; it was written beforehand on the forehead of each by *Adrishta*, the Unseen or Fate, what each should be, and so each is merely carrying out what was inevitable and unavoidable! The reader will observe that the Hindu fatalist differs from his brethren elsewhere; these regard Fate as a blind and arbitrary decree, without any reference to good or bad desert; with the Hindu the decrees of Fate go on the principle of rigid and impartial justice meting out the righteous consequences of past good or evil desert. As, however, the individual can neither realise his past identity or be conscious of his past conduct, the practical bearing of this view is much the same as that of the other.

presents to its votaries—a rest of personal extinction, a repose of lost individuality!

As has been implied, it would seem logically to follow that the same principle which necessitates transmigration at all would ensure its eternal succession. An essential feature, however, of Hindu philosophy, as we have before shown, is the final absorption of all forms of existence into Brahmă, the One All-pervading Essence. It was necessary, therefore, to fix some limit to transmigration. The notion prevails—on what grounds it rests is not evident—that the full tale of births allotted to any particular soul is eighty-four lakhs—eight millions, four hundred thousand! These accomplished, absorption into deity follows as a matter of course. But the grand aim and object of all religious exercises is to reduce the prescribed number of births, to get rid of conscious being before the whole course of transmigration is completed.

The above brief sketch of the deductions of Hindu philosophy will prepare us to comprehend the better the principles of Hindu worship. It must be borne in mind, then, that Hinduism presents three ways or means of salvation or absorption into deity. These are: (1) the way of works, (2) the way of faith, (3) the way of spiritual knowledge or perception. These three methods of deliverance, again, illustrate two leading aspects of Hinduism; it has its exoteric or popular aspect, the aspect which suits the masses, this embraces the *first* and *second* methods; it has also its esoteric aspect, a mystical and spiritual side suited to minds of a superior order, this is represented by the *third* method.

Let us consider the *last* first. He who is able to grasp and act out this higher principle—salvation by knowledge (Gyan)—need not trouble himself with popular theology; he has found the surest, the safest, and the shortest road to emancipation. His one duty is to train his soul to such habits of abstraction, to be so wrapt in contemplation of the Supreme Being, that

he shall gradually cease from action, from all such action as necessitates future births. The more he can bring himself into a state of mental abstraction, so that he shall be dead to sense, to passion, to desire, to self and the surrounding world, the nearer does he approach the glorious consummation; if at length, he succeed in realising the identity of his own soul with the One Great Soul, so that he can say and feel, '*I am* Brahmă,' his end is attained; all action ceases, and, as a river after meandering through the country for hundreds of miles, at last falls into the ocean and is lost, so will his soul merge into the ocean of Deity and thus gain eternal repose. The following passage from the Bhagavad-gita forcibly illustrates this process:—

That lowly man who stands immovable,
As if erect upon a pinnacle,
His appetites and organs all subdued,
Sated with knowledge secular and sacred,
To whom a lump of earth, a stone, or gold,
To whom friends, relatives, acquaintances,
Neutrals and enemies, the good and bad,
Are all alike, is called, 'one yoked with God.'
The man who aims at that supreme condition
Of perfect yoking with the Deity,
Must first of all be moderate in all things.
In food, in sleep, in vigilance, in action,
In exercise and recreation. Then
Let him, if seeking God by deep abstraction,
Abandon his possessions and his hopes,
Betake himself to some secluded spot,
And fix his heart and thoughts on God alone;
. . . . . . let him sit
Firm and erect, his body, head, and neck
Straight and immovable, his eyes directed
Towards a single point, not looking round,
Devoid of passion, free from anxious thought,
His heart restrained and deep in meditation.
E'en as a tortoise draws its head and feet
Within its shell, so must he keep his organs

Withdrawn from sensual objects. He whose senses
Are well controlled attains to sacred knowledge,
And thence obtains tranquillity of thought.
Without quiescence there can be no bliss.

Quiescence is the state of the Supreme.
He who, intent on meditation, joins
His soul with the Supreme, is like a flame
That flickers not when sheltered from the wind.

Those who have once beheld the sight of a religious devotee, sitting as above described, seeking union with deity, will not readily forget the scene. We know full well that there are multitudes in India who under the garb of an ascetic practise every conceivable abomination, these are the hypocrites of their order, and they predominate; but we know also that there are many earnest souls, with strange unearthly longings, who, knowing no better way and having no better hope, do, with the deepest devotion, seek union with God in the mode above described. We have seen such persons sitting for hours and days like motionless, lifeless statues, striving after utter self-forgetfulness and identification with the Deity; we have watched the expression of their marble features, always calm and passionless, sometimes sublime and spiritual, and we have turned away solemnised and saddened, and yearning for the speedy dawn of a brighter light on those who are thus painfully 'feeling after God if haply they may find Him.' Well do we remember the account which an eminent convert gave us of his father, who was one such a seeker after God. He said he never saw earnestness and devotion more intense, self-abnegation and deadness to the things of sense more complete, than his father evinced. 'Indeed,' said he, 'remembering what my father was and longed to be, I feel that he might well be termed *a holy man.*' [1]

[1] We remember a case in which a brother missionary seated himself by one such a religious devotee; he spoke to the man as he might have spoken to a tree or a stone; not a responsive word or sign was elicited, the man appeared to be lost

The above extract from the Bhagavad-gita prescribes the *modus operandi* for those who seek salvation through 'the way of knowledge.' A passage from a Vedantic tract called the *Atma-bodha*, 'knowledge of soul,' shows the grand result flowing from this system of devout contemplation.

> The saint who has attained to full perfection
> Of contemplation, sees the universe
> Existing in himself, and with the eye
> Of knowledge sees the All as the One Soul.
> When bodily disguises are dissolved,
> The perfect saint becomes completely blended
> With the One Soul, as water blends with water,
> As air unites with air, as fire with fire.
> That gain, than which there is no greater gain,
> That joy than which there is no greater joy,
> That lore than which there is no greater lore,
> Is the one Brahmă—this is certain truth.

It is very obvious that 'the way of knowledge' could only be trodden by the favoured few; it was the *narrow path* of Hinduism, and comparatively few and select have been those who have journeyed along it. Not only did its pursuit necessitate a higher order of mind than the masses possess, it was simply impossible for all men to sever themselves from social ties and the active duties of life; death to society and extinction of the race must have followed. A *broader path* for the millions was needed. The worship of Vishnu and Siva supplied the need. But it was needful, moreover, that popular Hinduism should wear a dual aspect, answering to two distinct currents of religious thought and feeling. These are expressed by the two

in profound contemplation. The missionary, however, delivered his message of grace and love, and then went his way, leaving the Yogi as he found him; at least, so it seemed; but it was *not* so; it proved that the foreigner's words had been like cold water to a thirsty soul; that anxious soul found therein an unwonted topic of reflection: as he pondered the fire burned, he quitted his retreat, sought out the missionary, and at length found a better and truer union with God than he had ever dreamt of before.

words, faith and works. These indicate the two sections into which religious communities resolve themselves—the two channels by which the devotion of human souls finds an outlet. The volatile, the self-indulgent, the sympathetic, may be powerfully impressed by religious influences; they may also be ardently devout; but they must have a genial religion—a religion which combines the *maximum* of satisfaction with the *minimum* of sacrifice. Others, again, have a colder nature, they have an austere, moody, severe cast of mind; such persons instinctively affect a sterner form of religion, with these salvation is a matter, not of grace, but of *merit*, and merit accrues from self-denial and voluntary mortification. The worshippers of Vishnu come under the *first*, the votaries of Siva under the *second* denomination.

The Vaishnavas see in the incarnations of their deity, God descending to man, making himself one with man, sharing not only human woes but human defects. A true instinct prompted the conception of a Divine incarnation, but what a hideous form did that true idea assume! In Krishna every human vice was deified, and Krishna is the loathsome object at whose feet millions fall. As we have before stated, one class of Krishna's worshippers accept the grossest features of his history in their naked literality, another class allegorise those features till they make them deep spiritual mysteries; but the one essential characteristic of all Vaishnavas is *faith* or devotion (Bhakti). God is pleased with the entire consecration of the soul, with its simple, unreasoning trust, with the outpouring of its love and affection; he asks not for painful sacrifices, for self-mortification; —how could he, when he himself has set such an example of self-indulgence? All he requires is the faith and love of the heart; the life may be loose, the passions uncurbed; but if, through it all, the deity be loved and honoured, he is pleased, and the soul is helped forward towards the goal of emancipation—absorption into the Supreme Deity. Any number of inferior deities may

be worshipped; all that is needed to make such worship effectual is to have *Bhakti*, faith—to see Vishnu in them all, to honour him through all. In this way, as a drop of water may fall into a river, and so be materially hastened in its progress to the ocean, so may the souls of the worshippers find absorption in the inferior deities, and thus expedite their journey towards the mighty ocean of Brahmă, the final goal. Thus have the Vaishnavas become the Antinomians of India, and so justified the taunt of the Saivas, that theirs is the 'self-indulgent way of salvation.'

The Saivas represent the opposite pole of religious sentiment; their principle is, not to bring down God to man, but to raise man to God; not to abase the Deity to share man's defects, but, by mortifying their natural frailties, to raise themselves to communion with divine perfections. Here, again, an element of truth—a nugget of pure gold—is discernible in the conception; but, alas! in the manipulation the fine gold again becomes dim, or rather *vile dross*. Siva himself is depicted as the impersonation of asceticism and austerity. In Krishna we behold the deity assume a sensual human garb. In Siva we see God presenting a type of *un*human severity. He is depicted as sitting on a mountain, lost in meditation; he wears a necklace of human skulls, he holds in his hand a rosary of the same ghastly character; his hair is interlaced with serpents, which hang around his neck. Such as is the god, such must his worshippers be; theirs is the religion of works, *Karma*; the greater their self-denial, the more excruciating their self-torture, the greater the merit. The subjugation of their passions, the repression of the animal, and the elevation of the spiritual side of their nature, is not the thing desiderated; the only essential feature is the voluntary enduring of pain and misery. To hold up an arm till it is withered and fixed, to be scorched by five fires, to lie on a bed of spikes, to gaze on the midday sun till the organ of vision is utterly destroyed—these are so many

means of accumulating merit, and hastening the desired emancipation—absorption into the Supreme.

The reader will not fail to observe a degree of affinity between Saivaism and the Gyan-marga, 'the way of knowledge.' Each method involved the feature of asceticism: and, as a matter of fact, considerable numbers of the travellers along the path of knowledge pay their devotions at the shrine of Siva. Yet the principles of the two systems are essentially distinct; in the one case, union with Deity is the result of contemplation, complete mental abstraction; in the other, self-mortification is practised as a means of laying the Deity under obligation; the grand total of suffering is credited to the worshipper's account; he thus gets power with God, and makes God his debtor. The recompense of his austerities is absorption into the Deity at the end of this life, and consequent deliverance from future births.[1]

It must not be imagined that the severity of Siva never relaxed; the brand of sensuality rests upon him no less than upon Krishna. In his history the story of lust strangely blends with the narrative of self-torture; the object which represents this god in all his temples throughout India (*linga*) commemorates a passage in his history far too corrupt for recital. It is no wonder, therefore, that multitudes of the disciples of the Siva cult have imitated their god in this respect. Several secret communities calling themselves *Bahm-margis*, left-handed sects, connect with the self-denying ordinances of Siva the celebration of rites of the most revolting and sensual

[1] This whole subject of penance (*tapas*) in India is a puzzling feature, the difficulty is to trace its *rationale*; the idea seems to be that, irrespective of moral character or moral aim, the mere fact of voluntary suffering prevails with God; it prevails with him often in spite of himself and against his own inclinations; he cannot help himself, he must succumb to the force of *tapas*; a mortal or an inferior deity or a demon may carry on his self-inflicted tortures to such a pitch and for such a length of time, as shall actually subjugate the Supreme Being to his will. The reader will remember that it was in this way Ravana, the demon-king of Ceylon, achieved his all-but-irresistible might.

character. This is especially true of those called *Shaktas*, the worshippers of *Shakti*, the female principle.

Parvati, the wife of Siva, is represented by goddesses of immense popularity at the present day. In Bengal, Durga and Kali may be said to monopolise the devotion of the masses. The latter of these has her principal shrine in the city of Calcutta; that city derives its name from the bloody goddess which sits therein. No object more frightful than Kali could well be looked upon; her character is as dark as her name (*Kali*, black) and her person. Her delight is in *blood*; under her protection and blessing the Thugs of India carried out their diabolical system of treachery and murder; *human* blood is to her most grateful of all; in former days children used to be slaughtered before her shrine; at the present time she has to content herself with the blood of animals alone. Repeatedly have we in passing her temple seen the sacrificial stream flowing; as many as two hundred animals, chiefly goats, are sometimes slain there in one day.

This leads us to notice an important feature of what we may call mediæval Hinduism. Declension and deterioration were to be traced everywhere; caste, which in Vedic times could hardly be said to have any existence, had gradually hardened into a stern and rigid institution, separating man from man, smiting at the roots of fellowship and human sympathy. All the while had Brahmanical pride and tyranny been growing, until at length the priestly caste had its foot upon the neck of every other class of the community. The key of knowledge the Brahmans held with a firm grasp; they were to dispense light for the millions, but not the light which they had received from their Aryan forefathers. They set themselves to improve the ancestral faith, to invent new doctrines, to develop unheard-of theories. The Vedas they accepted as inspired, but they added to them the Brahmanas and Upanishads, and for these compositions of their own they claimed a divine authority no

less than that which attached to the Vedas themselves. Under their tutelage the people receded from the simplicity of the primitive faith and worship; old Vedic deities and usages and ideas gradually faded into oblivion, or had grafted upon them entirely new features. The elaboration of the Darshanas, the six schools of philosophy, introduced fresh elements of change and expansion.

The primitive doctrine of sacrifice was one of the first to yield to the principle of development. The original idea of vicarious atonement, of the deliverance of man by the transfer of his sin and punishment to an innocent animal, had long been a stumbling-block to reason. It was encumbered with a second difficulty which had to be surmounted; admitting that, by some inconceivable process, animal sacrifices might secure the sinner's pardon and future bliss, still what account was to be given of the irregularities of the present state of things? how was this existing scene of confusion—suffering virtue and triumphant vice—to be explained? The sacrifices might affect the unseen state, but they touched not the present inequalities; how could these be reconciled with the notion of divine justice and equity?

Let us not wonder at their perplexity, let us not chide their rationalistic efforts at a solution; the difficulties were real, the attempts at solution natural; but the utter failure of their endeavours to solve the problem forcibly illustrates human helplessness and the need of divine light. The doctrine of *transmigration* was evolved to meet the difficulty; this was supposed to cover the whole case; it justified the ways of God, for it represented Him as meting out a righteous award to every human soul; it cleared up the confusion of life, for it made the present condition of every man a just retribution for his conduct in previous births. But the conception was, of course, fatal to the idea of vicarious atonement; no room was left for that if every individual had to bear his own punishment.

Thus the primitive institution of sacrifice was virtually superseded, it was reasoned out of existence. Offerings were still made to the gods; and animals were still sacrificed in their temples, but the original idea of sacrifice was well-nigh obliterated; the offerings were the food of the gods, and the sacrifices were to appease their thirst for blood. Primæval traditions were being overclouded, primitive faith weakened, primitive simplicity corrupted. Seeds of error in Vedic theology were germinating in a rationalistic soil, and an abundant crop of dubious speculations followed. Thus Hinduism grew less and less like its Aryan original, and man wandered further and further from God. The Hindus were ever feeling after God; but it is an affecting and suggestive fact that, in their very efforts to find God by the light of reason alone, they were receding further from Him. 'Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?' (Job xi. 7, 8). Of those seeds of error which inhered in the primitive system none has been more potent and prolific than the pantheistic element. It has literally permeated Hinduism, and saturated the Hindus; it enters into every conception of the sages, and it is burnt into the very nature of the people.

Yet, though Hinduism as a system had lost much of its primitive simplicity and purity, though its religious teaching and moral force had sadly deteriorated, it still retained much that was admirable; the lamp of devotion still burnt brightly in many a soul, and sublime sentiments breathed in many a fervid page. The literature of the era of which we are speaking is a remarkable medley; its 'wood, hay, stubble' greatly preponderate, but there are nuggets of the gold of Ophir, 'and gems of purest ray serene,' to be met with; elaborate nonsense and childish imbecility may characterise the greater part of what was written, but sentiments of sober truth and profound wisdom ever and anon

appear. Perhaps we might even safely state that, though *theologically* Hinduism degenerated in the period spoken of, *ethically* it advanced; the code of morals—we will not say was raised higher than that of the Vedic era—but it certainly obtained a development and force of enunciation which it had formerly lacked; the duty of man to man was made more plain to the eye and ear. All this may seem somewhat anomalous; for logically, it would seem to follow that pantheistic teaching lays the axe to the root of moral perception. May not the solution of the anomaly be found in the supposition that the people were really better than their system? At no period could it be said that their *practical* morality was of a high order, but they ever discerned and approved the right. Pantheism could neither silence the voice of conscience nor quench the fire of devotion; theoretically they were pantheists, practically they were theists or polytheists. According to their theory all was *maya*, illusion, all portions of the one great Entity, but they worshipped and acted as though they disbelieved this doctrine; or, at least, they seem to have felt that, though it might be theoretically true, it was *practically false.*

We will conclude this chapter with a few extracts from the Shasters in confirmation of these remarks. We have already quoted a passage from the Bhagavad-gita, in which the mode of attaining absorption into the Deity is illustrated; we will add another in which Krishna, speaking as the Supreme Being, gives expression to sentiments of singular beauty and sublimity.[1]

> I am the cause of the whole universe,
> Through me it is created and dissolved;

[1] The Bhagavad-gita is one of the most interesting works that Sanscrit literature can boast of; it deals with the mystical doctrines of the Upanishads, and illustrates the efforts of the Eclectic School of Indian philosophy to reconcile and harmonise the conflicting doctrines of the different systems; it labours to show how a devout and intelligent Hindu may consistently embrace all that is taught, and practise all that is enjoined in those varying systems. The Eclectic Philosophers were evidently the 'Broad-Churchmen' of Mediæval Hinduism.

On me all things within it hang suspended,
Like pearls upon a string. I am the light
In sun and moon, far, far removed from darkness;
I am the brilliancy in flame, the radiance
In all that's radiant, and the light of lights.
. . . . . . I watch the universe
With eyes and face in all directions turned.
I dwell as wisdom in the heart of all;
I am the goodness of the good, I am
Beginning, middle, end, eternal Time,
The Birth, the Death of all. I am the symbol A
Among the characters. I have created all
Out of one portion of myself. . . . .
Then be not sorrowful: from all thy sins
I will deliver thee. Think thou on me,
Have faith in me, adore and worship me,
And join thyself in meditation unto me;
Thus shalt thou come to me, O Arjuna;
Thus shalt thou rise to my supreme abode.
Where neither sun nor moon have need to shine;
For know that all the lustre they possess is mine.

Then follows the devout response of the hero Arjuna to this divine communication:—

Have mercy, God of gods; the universe
Is fitly dazzled by thy majesty,
Fitly to thee alone devotes its homage.
At thy approach the evil demons flee,
Scattered in terror to the winds of heaven.
The multitude of holy saints adore thee—
Thee, first Creator, Lord of all the gods,
The Ancient One, supreme Receptacle
Of all that is and is not, knowing all,
And to be known by all. Immensely vast,
Thou comprehendest all, thou art the All.
. . . .
To thee be sung a thousand hymns of praise
By every creature and from every quarter,
Before, above, behind. Hail! hail! thou All!
Again and yet again I worship thee.

No subject seems to have weighed more upon the minds of thoughtful Hindus than the transitoriness and the vanity of life; repeatedly do they dilate on this topic, and often with deep and touching emphasis. The following is an example of the kind from the Upanishad, called the Maitrayani:—

The universe is tending to decay;
Grass, trees, and animals spring up and die.
But what are they? Beings greater still than these,
Gods, demigods, and demons, all have gone;
But what are they? for others greater still
Have passed away, vast oceans have been dried,
Mountains thrown down, the polar star displaced,
The cords that bind the planets rent asunder,
The whole earth deluged with a flood of water,
E'en highest angels driven from their stations.
In such a world what relish can there be
For true enjoyment? Deign to rescue us;
Thou only art our Refuge, holy Lord.

The following lines from the Bhagavad-gita is a clear and decided enunciation of the immortality of the soul:—

These bodies that enclose the everlasting soul, inscrutable,
Immortal, have an end; but he who thinks the soul can be destroyed,
And he who deems it a destroyer, are alike mistaken; it
Kills not, and is not killed; it is not born, nor doth it ever die.

Of course, the pervading idea is that the soul of man is a portion of the One Supreme Soul, and *therefore* is immortal.

We have spoken before of the endeavour of the philosophers to solve the riddle of life's inequalities by the doctrine of transmigration. We are about to cite a beautiful passage from the Mahabharat, which apparently ignores that doctrine, and offers a solution of the problem in language which, if it had not been composed more than two thousand years ago, we might have been tempted to say was borrowed from our Christian Scriptures:

Who in this world is able to distinguish
The virtuous from the wicked? both alike
The fruitful earth supports, on both alike
Refreshing breezes blow, and both alike
The waters purify.[1] Not so hereafter—
Then shall the good be severed from the bad;[2]
Then in a region bright with golden lustre,
Centre of light and immortality,
The righteous after death shall dwell in bliss.
Then a terrific hell awaits the wicked;
Profound abyss of utter misery,
Into the depths of which bad men shall fall
Headlong, and mourn their doom for countless years.

We will now furnish a few specimens of the moral sentiments which, like sparkling gems, every now and then illumine the pages of the sacred books of the Hindus. Not many, perhaps, of our readers would expect to gaze upon such a string of pearls as we are about to present. Doubtless, all will agree that, though for centuries the shades of error had been falling upon the people, the light which was in them had not become utter darkness; a softened twilight relieved their moral gloom. Alas! there is too much ground to suspect that hardly the faintest glimmer of this light reached the outer circle of the population; for it is a noteworthy fact, of which every missionary is aware, that, as regards the mass of the people, they are familiar with the *worst* and ignorant of the *best* portions of their sacred literature. Still the existence of such sentiments as we are about to cite affords additional confirmation of the great truth that God 'left not himself without witness' in the land.[3]

[1] 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust' (Matt. v. 45).

[2] 'The angels shall come forth, and shall sever the wicked from among the just' (Matt. xiii. 49).

[3] The passages following are selected from Manu's Achora ('Rules of Conduct'), the Mahabharat, the Pancha-tantra, and the Hitopodesha.

We begin with the following epitome of the moral and religious duty of man :—

> Contentment, patience under injury,
> Self-subjugation, honesty, restraint
> Of all the sensual organs, purity,
> Devotion, knowledge of the Deity,
> Veracity, and abstinence from anger ;
> These form the tenfold summary of duty.

The following sentences bear upon divine omniscience and the human conscience :—

> . . . Thou thinkest, O good friend,
> 'I am alone,' but there resides within thee
> A Being who inspects thy every act,
> Knows all thy goodness and thy wickedness.
> The soul is its own witness ; yea, the soul
> Itself is its own refuge ; grieve not,
> O man, thy soul, the great internal witness.

The next passage enforces the necessity of purity of heart, and the futility of outward observances apart from that.

> When thou hast sinned, think not to hide thy guilt
> Under a cloak of penance and austerity.
> No study of the Veda, nor oblation,
> Nor gift of alms, nor round of strict observance
> Can lead the inwardly depraved to heaven.

The following exhortation to trust in God reminds one of how Jesus taught the same lesson, and in a similar strain :—

> Strive not too anxiously for a subsistence,
> Thy Maker will provide thee sustenance ;
> No sooner is a human being born
> Than milk for his support streams from the breast.
> He by whose hand the swans were painted white,
> And parrots green, and peacocks many-hued,
> Will make provision for thy maintenance.

Another passage glances from earthly to *heavenly* treasure ;

again a sound strikes the ear, strangely analogous to another utterance of the Great Master:—

> Lay up the only treasure; . . .
> Amass that wealth which thieves cannot abstract,
> Nor tyrants seize, which follows thee at death,
> Which never wastes away, nor is corrupted.

'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way,' said Jesus; the Mahabharat says:—

> Heaven's gate is very narrow and minute,
> It cannot be perceived by foolish men,
> Blinded by vain illusions of the world.
> E'en the clear-sighted, who discern the way
> And seek to enter, find the portal barred
> And hard to be unlocked.[1] Its massive bolts
> Are pride and passion, avarice and lust.

'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth' is a precept enforced in the following lines:—

> Pride not thyself on thy religious works;
> Give to the poor, but talk not of thy gifts.
> By pride religious merit melts away,
> The merit of thy alms by ostentation.

'Overcome evil with good' is a familiar sound in our ears, but we should hardly have looked for such a precept amongst the Hindus; yet here it is:—

> Conquer a man who never gives by gifts,
> Subdue untruthful men by truthfulness;
> Vanquish an angry man by gentleness;
> And overcome the evil man by goodness.

Who would have expected to find the great lesson 'Blessing for cursing' taught by Hindu sages more than two thousand years ago? Yet it *was* taught in these words:—

[1] '*Strive* to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will *seek* to enter in and shall not be able' (Luke xiii. 24).

Treat no one with disdain, with patience bear
Reviling language; with an angry man
Be never angry; *blessings give for curses.*
Bear railing words with patience; never meet
An angry man with anger, nor return
Reviling for reviling,[1] smite not him
Who smiteth thee,[2] let thy speech and acts be gentle.

'And who is my neighbour?' was the heartless query of the selfish lawyer, Luke x. 29. Jesus answered him by the beautiful parable of the Samaritan. The Pancha-tantra would answer him thus:—

The little-minded ask, 'Belongs this man
To our own family?' The noble-hearted
Regard the human race as all akin.

The golden rule, 'to do to all men as we would they should do to us,' and the beautiful precept, 'to love our neighbour as ourselves,' were similarly known and taught centuries before the birth of our Lord. The Mahabharat says:—

Do nought to others which, if done to thee,
Would cause thee pain; this is the sum of duty.

This is the sum of all true righteousness—
Treat others as thou would'st thyself be treated.
Do nothing to thy neighbour which hereafter
Thou would'st not have thy neighbour do to thee.
In causing pleasure, or in giving pain,
In doing good or injury to others,
In granting or refusing a request,
A man obtains a proper rule of action
By looking on his neighbour as himself.[3]

[1] 'When he was reviled, he reviled not again' (1 Peter ii. 23).

[2] 'Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also' (Matt. v. 39).

[3] It is an interesting and noteworthy circumstance that the Golden Rule was taught by Confucius in China (B.C. 500) somewhere about the time that the chief portions of the Mahabharat were composed. A disciple of the Chinese sage asked him for a single sentence which would comprise the whole duty of man; he

It would be easy to multiply striking and beautiful sentiments of a similar kind; but we forbear. The selections we have made are enough to show that, in India, as elsewhere, amidst much theological gloom, the light of conscience and of the moral sense still survived. Neither pantheism nor polytheism could effectually extinguish the moral and religious torch which *God* and not man had lighted.

We can well imagine that, with some of our readers, other feelings than those of surprise and interest may have attended the perusal of the foregoing extracts. Some may be even disconcerted and troubled by the discovery that they were wrong in supposing the Bible absolutely unique in its moral teaching. They have, it may be, all along inferred that no parallel to its sublime enunciations could anywhere be found; it almost startles them to find that some of the loftiest precepts of Christianity were taught in heathen lands ages before its Divine Author appeared in the world. Yet there is no denying this fact; it is a truth which we must accept and admit.

It has been well said that—'Half the errors in the world

replied, 'Do nothing to any man which you would not wish him to do to you.' This precept occurs five times in the writings of Confucius.

The following lines from the Mahabharat remind one of the familiar simile of the 'beam' and the 'mote' (Matt. vii. 3):—

> 'An evil-minded man is quick to see
> His neighbour's faults, though small as mustard-seed;
> But when he turns his eyes towards his own,
> Though large as Bilva fruit, he none descries.'

The following are a few of the striking utterances of Seneca, the Roman philosopher, and others—'Expect from another what you do to another.' 'Other men's sins are before our eyes, our own behind our back.' 'Let him who hath conferred a favour hold his tongue.' 'God comes to men; nay, what is nearer, comes *into* men.' 'A good man is God's disciple and imitator and his true offspring.' 'Temples are not to be built for God with stones piled on high. He is to be consecrated in the breast of each.' Epictetus also says, 'If you always remember that in all you do, in soul or body, God stands by as a witness, in all your prayers and your actions you will not err; and you shall have God dwelling with you.' An Arabian maxim, quoted by the Persian poet Sadi, says, 'Confer benefits on him who has injured thee.'

have originated in taking things for granted.' The volume of inspiration has been sorely wronged on this very principle; in this way has it been 'wounded in the house of its friends,' and gratuitously assailed by its numerous foes. For instance, 'the men of the Book' have, in past days, taken it for granted that the science of the Bible chimed in with the science of that period—it was, perhaps, quite natural that they should assume, and without very deep searching decide, that such harmony did really exist; but when, as time went on, their science was proved to be defective or erroneous, their wisdom clearly was to review their position, and readjust their standpoint. On the other hand, the enemies of the Book have all too eagerly taken it for granted that the interpretations of its friends were tenable, and so have recklessly hurled against the venerable record the shafts of ridicule and scorn. 'Down with it! down with it, even to the ground! it must perish along with its exploded science!'—such has been their boastful and too hasty cry. The voice of wisdom replies, 'Wait a while; first prove beyond a doubt that your science is right, and then honestly search and see if, rightly understood, the Book is at variance with your scientific demonstrations.' Will any candid reader deny that, so far as wisdom's voice has been obeyed, the result has been eminently satisfactory? Crudities in science have been remedied, errors of Biblical interpretation have been rectified, and the upshot tends to show that the Bible need not fear science, nor science the Bible.

There is a close parallel between modern scientific discovery and the 'unearthing' of the religious and moral treasures of ancient nations by students of our own day. These have dug down into the literary strata long hidden from human eyes, and, as the reward of their toil, have brought to light mines of moral wealth of whose existence our forefathers never dreamt. Our forefathers 'took it for granted' that the Bible was the sole repertory of Divine truth, the solitary mine of moral

wealth. As they drew the moral map of the world, they saw themselves occupying a sphere of hallowed radiance, whilst the surrounding region was one of unrelieved, unbroken gloom—the blackness of darkness. When the inner rim of the dark circle showed certain luminous streaks (as in the utterances of a Seneca, an Epictetus, and a Marcus Aurelius) the phenomenon was readily accounted for—'these were but gleams borrowed from the bright centre.' But what shall we say now, when it is clear that the outermost boundary of the dark circle was intersected by lustrous beams strangely akin to the brilliancy of the favoured centre? What shall we say? Why, what *can* we say? The thing is true, it is incontrovertible, and if our foregone conclusions clash with the fact, the error is in them, and not in it. Clearly we are again driven to readjust our stand-point.

The question then is—does the Bible itself go on the assumption indicated? does it claim for itself a monopoly of divine light and moral truth? does it depict the outer circle, the heathen world, as a region of unmitigated gloom? The only answer to these queries is a full and *decided negative.*

Take, as an example of Biblical teaching on this subject, the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. No doubt, the picture is sombre enough when it portrays the condition into which the heathen had sunk; but it shows the dark cloud of human depravity tinged throughout with Heaven-sent light. As regards *theological* knowledge, we read, 'That which may be known of God is manifest in them (the heathen), for God hath showed it unto them.' 'When they *knew* God, they glorified him not as God'—expressions which certainly imply that God, in some way, made divine knowledge accessible to the heathen, and that they, in some sense, possessed that knowledge. The same is involved in the saying that 'they *held the truth* in unrighteousness.' As regards their *moral status*, we are distinctly assured that they were 'a law unto themselves,' having 'the

work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another' (Rom. ii. 14, 15). Now all this strictly accords with the actual condition of the heathen world. As we have seen, the Hindus have ever had precious fragments of divine truth in their various systems, whilst their code of morals in great part reads as an echo of Christian ethics. The unbeliever lays his finger on this fact and says, 'After all, then, Christianity taught no *new* truth, its moral teaching had long been anticipated.' The obvious answer is—Christianity never professed to propound a new moral code; Jesus never said that the great moral lessons which he taught had never been listened to before. The Apostles never hinted this; St. Paul disdained not to enforce Christian truth by truth borrowed from heathen poets: the following texts are instances of the kind—'As certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring' (Acts xvii. 28); and 'Evil communications corrupt good manners[1] (1 Cor. xv. 33). 'People sometimes write and talk as if Pagan truth were one thing and Christian truth another; but truth comes only from Him who is the Truth, and neither Jewish prophet nor heathen philosopher can attain to it, or act up to it, save by His aid.'[2] Even so, all light comes down from 'the Father of lights,' and of Him who was the True Light it has with literal truth been said, 'He lighteth every man that cometh into the world' (John i. 9).

What advantage, then, hath Christianity? much every way; but chiefly in this, that it, and it alone, *supplies the missing link*. Man has ever known his duty, but he has ever lacked the power to fulfil it; Christianity alone has supplied the *power*. The world has been like a well-constructed but motionless machine, it needed *steam*; Christianity has supplied motive power. Call it conscience, moral sense, natural religion—what you will,

[1] From Menander's 'Thais.'

[2] Preface to Farrar's 'Seekers after God.'

man has ever had a sacred witness and a faithful monitor; but what has that availed? the bitter cry of human helplessness has ever been going up:—

> Ah! if he give not *arms* as well as rules,
> What can he more than tell us we are fools?

Christianity has given 'arms,' whilst every other system merely furnished 'rules.' By its wondrous display of divine compassion, by the presentation of its marvellous scheme of vicarious atonement, by its matchless example of redeeming love, by the glorious hopes which it inspires, it electrifies the dormant affections and energies of the human mind; it satisfies its deepest yearnings, it pours a stream of living vigour into dead souls, and brings to a beautiful and glorious realisation man's moral sense; it enables him not only to appreciate and approve, but to *do* the things which are 'lovely, honest, pure, and of good report.' In this sense, emphatically, Christianity is unique and incomparable. However beautiful the moral precepts of the heathen may be, it is the beauty of a corpse hastening to decay; Christianity breathes life into the corpse and arrests its decomposition. Was not Europe such a putrescent corpse at the advent of Christianity?[1]

[1] No one, be he friend or foe, would deny the vast superiority of Christianity (viewed merely as a system of ethics) over every other system; its code of morals has a wider and a loftier range than has any other that the world has known. But Christian ethics rest upon Christian *principles*, and these are *sui generis*. Viewed in this light, the words of a writer already quoted from are no less true than beautiful. 'A Seneca, a Musonius Rufus, an Epictetus, a Marcus Aurelius, might have been taught by the humblest Christian child about a Comfort, an Example, a Hope, which were capable of gilding their lives with unknown brightness and happiness—capable of soothing the anguish of every sorrow, of breaking the violence of every temptation, of lightening the burden of every care' (Farrar's 'Seekers after God').

It has often struck us that those who insist upon regarding the Bible and Christianity as a *natural outcome* and uninspired conception of the Jewish race, overlook a feature of singular difficulty. It must be admitted, indeed it *is* admitted, that this moral and religious outcome is not only in advance of every other system, but that, whilst every other system has evinced a tendency to decay and degrada-

tion, its course has been an *upward and improving* one; every other system has moved along an inclined plane—passing from greater to lesser light; why, in one case alone should the gradient be reversed? why should its course be exceptional—passing from lesser to greater light? The difficulty becomes all the more inexplicable (that is, on merely natural grounds) when we take into account the relative inferiority of the Jewish race in point of literature, science, and philosophy, to most of the nations of antiquity. Whence, then, their superior moral elevation? lowest in the intellectual scale, how have they evolved a system of such moral and religious excellence? Here is clearly a case in which 'the last has become first and the first last.' Is this from Heaven, or is it of men?

CHAPTER V.

THE BUDDHIST ERA.

'Having no hope, and without God (*Atheists*) in the world' (Ephes. ii. 12).

We come now to a crisis in the religious history of India, of the most solemn and momentous kind; momentous, not merely, nor chiefly, because of its effects upon India, but because of its tremendous consequences to countless millions in other lands. We feel almost awe-struck as we contemplate the origin of that mighty system of religion which for 2,400 years has maintained a dominant sway in the East, and is at this moment the faith of 450 millions of men—one third the population of the globe! Reason is paralysed, and the mind overwhelmed by the thought that such a system was permitted to arise and prevail, a system which teaches every third man in the world to declare, as the first article of his creed '*There is no God.*' We can only bow to the mysterious fact, whilst reason is hushed to silence by a still small voice, 'Be still and know that I am God!'

The thoughtful reader needs not to be told that Buddhism, in its evolution, followed the ordinary law of cause and effect; it succeeded, in short, as a natural sequence to facts and movements which had preceded it; its way had been prepared, its seed sown, before it appeared as a visible and stern reality. Decadence and decay had long characterised Hinduism; primitive sincerity and simplicity had yielded to growing formality; the objects of worship had been greatly multiplied, the forms of worship had become complicated and mysterious; sacerdotal influence had been immensely developed; the institution of

caste had become a powerful engine of tyranny and wrong; Brahmanical domination had reached its hated climax. Side by side with all this, rationalistic speculations had been sapping the foundations of primitive belief and trust; systems of philosophy were growing up which, while they intensely exercised the intellect, left the soul dark and dubious and sad; an atmosphere of hazy unreality pervaded everything present or future.

Such was the state of things when, somewhere about 550 B.C., the founder of Buddhism was born.[1] He was a Kshatriya by caste, and of royal blood. His father was the sovereign of a principality at the foot of the mountains of Nepaul. His family name was Gautama; he afterwards added to that name the appellation *Sramana* (ascetic). He was also called Sakya, to which definition the term *Muni* (saint) was appended. In after life, *i.e.* when he evolved his religious system, he took the name of Buddha (the enlightened one). Another name by which he

[1] It is a singular and deeply interesting fact that about this very time did other leaders of thought and founders of systems appear in other parts of the world. At this period was Pythagoras propounding in Greece many weighty truths and the strange doctrine of transmigration, whilst Zoroaster in Persia and Confucius in China were searching for light and labouring for the moral elevation of their fellows. The era indicated seems to have been remarkable for a sort of simultaneous movement of master-minds anxious to solve deep and awful mysteries.

It is due to our readers and ourselves to observe that, in adopting the substantial truth of the following history of Buddha, we by no means vouch for the absolute veracity of all the particulars of that history. It is a history pertaining to, what may be almost termed, 'the pre-historic period.' We do not say that imagination and tradition may not have contributed a *touch* or a *twist* to the original facts of that history; but we unhesitatingly accept the general truthfulness of the story. In answer to those who would repudiate the whole history as a myth and invention, it is enough to say that the ablest Orientalists are against them; nor is it too much to aver that an overwhelming preponderance of probability is against them too. Buddhism is a *fact*; it had an origin; it possessed an elevated morality; that it owed its origin and its morality to some one master-mind is what few persons would dispute. The story of Buddha accounts for the phenomenon of the system which bears his name; viewing the conditions of Hindu society at the period referred to, the story of the Reformer is natural and probable. On the other hand, if we reject the story we have the great fact of the origin of the system absolutely unaccounted for. Besides which, so peculiar are the features of this story—so unlike a mere creation of fancy—that, we may venture to say, *it would have taken a genuine Buddha to have conceived a fictitious one.*

is sometimes spoken of is Siddhartha (desired-object-attained); a legend states that this name was given him by his parents, who regarded the child as bestowed upon them in answer to prayer. He was born at Kapila-Vastu, the capital of the kingdom.

From his very childhood he appears to have been of a thoughtful and studious turn, insomuch that the wise men of his father's Court predicted that he would at some time forsake the world and become a religious devotee. His father was sorely distressed at this ascetic tendency in the boy, and resolutely set himself to arrest and divert it. Accordingly, Gautama was early married, and the allurements and dissipations of an Eastern Court were skilfully spread out before him. There seems little reason to doubt that he actually yielded to these seductions, and for years revelled in the dubious pleasures which, without stint, were provided for him; tradition states that he had three wives and some thousands of concubines.

So he lived up to his twenty-ninth year; probably the king consoled himself with the thought that his son was cured of his moody turn, and, it may be, Gautama himself thought so too. But it proved otherwise; deep down in his soul there was a sense of disquiet which nothing could stifle, there were longings which nothing could satisfy; the shouts of revelry might silence for a time the inward tumult, but it was still there; and, doubtless, not unfrequently bitter moments of disgust and restlessness succeeded to scenes of reckless indulgence. It is easy to understand how, when an anxious mind is oscillating between two courses, a little thing may decide its choice. The story runs that, when Gautama was in this state of mind, he incidentally witnessed, in succession, four sights which powerfully affected him, and actually decided his future course. The first object was a decrepit old man; this led him to reflect on the miseries of old age. He next passed a wretched leper, covered with sores; here Gautama's thoughts glanced off to the manifold

forms of disease and suffering with which the world abounds. The next object which crossed his path was a dead body; 'And this,' said he, 'is the end to which I and all must come!' The picture was truly dark for him; the present was a gloomy enigma, and the future was unbroken night. A mind differently constituted to his might have adopted the Epicurean remedy: 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' Gautama could no longer rest without seeking some solution of the dark problem. Anon, another object presented itself to him; he beheld a recluse sitting wrapt in deep meditation. 'That,' said he to himself, 'is the only course for me to pursue.' The die was cast, his resolve was taken; he would turn his back upon the world—he would leave all that were dear to him; he would bury himself in solitude, and seek, by a life of austerity and reflection, to unravel the deep mystery which oppressed and distracted his soul. That very night did he quit his home, determined no more to visit the haunts of men till he had found out a way of deliverance for himself and others.

As it proved, he was not to be alone in his retirement; five Brahmans joined him, sharing his privations, and emulating him in seeking light by meditation. Efforts were not spared to divert him from his purpose; King Bimbisara of Maghada strove hard to wean him from what seemed so senseless a pursuit; the king offered him half his kingdom if he would give up his design; the answer of Gautama was pointed and striking. 'I seek not,' said he, 'an earthly kingdom; I wish to become a Buddha' (an enlightened person).

Six years passed over, during which he practised the utmost severities, following with rigorous strictness the Brahmanical rule for the observance of ascetics. He thus honestly tested the beaten 'way of knowledge,' but experience taught him the futility of this method; he got no light for his soul, and his body was sinking under his rigid mortifications. He changed his plan; he began to take more nourishment, that with a body

more vigorous he might obtain a higher degree of mental concentration. His Brahman friends now forsook him; he was left utterly alone. He went to the neighbourhood of Gaya, there he seated himself under a mimosa tree (*Ficus religiosa*), and recommenced in solitude his meditations. The legend states that Mara, the devil, and other evil spirits at this time fiercely assailed him; he, however, successfully battled with these temptations, and at length obtained the desire of his soul—he found out the source of evil, and the way of emancipation.

The conclusions he arrived at may be thus expressed: 1. There is no supreme intelligent Author of nature. 2. Matter and individual souls have existed from eternity. 3. Animated being involves desire, and desire (a craving for supposed good) involves suffering. 4. Deliverance from suffering involves deliverance from desire, *nirvana*, extinction. Reduced to the form of a creed this theory propounds three articles of faith—singularly brief and strangely appalling!

1. There is no God.[1]
2. Conscious existence is the worst possible evil.
3. Annihilation is the highest possible good.

Such was the outcome of so many years of painful, persistent research; such the only answer which nature or intuition gave to the plaintive cry for knowledge which rose from an anxious and earnest soul! To our minds the result seems terribly unsatisfying and painfully chilling; strange to say, it did not thus strike the mind of Gautama; probably it was but one of many speculations which had preceded it in the mind of the enquirer. As these in succession had been discarded as untenable, we can well understand that the shadows of despair began to gather thick around him; at length, out of his

[1] Gautama virtually, though not expressly, taught this terrible negation, for, in accounting for the origin of things and in constructing his system, he entirely ignored and set aside all idea of a God.

very despair, he evolved the conception which we have described. All his efforts had been to pierce the dark cloud of human suffering; his efforts had failed; unaided by revelation and faith he could not discern the bright sunshine which lay beyond that cloud. What then could he do? the cloud would neither rend nor remove; he tinged it with the lurid gleam of atheism and hopelessness; better, as it seemed to him, to have no God than a god of imperfection, darkness, and wrath, and better to *cease to be*, than continue to live in the life that is.

There is truth in the axiom, 'Anything better than suspense,' and this doubtless accounts for the ecstasy of Gautama when he had once reached a definite conclusion. He had at least become a Buddha; he would be no more tossed about on the sea of uncertainty, he now knew the *best* and knew the *worst* of all that had troubled him. The following effusion denotes his rapturous joy at his achievement:—

> See what true knowledge has effected here!
> The lust and anger which infest the world,
> Arising from delusion, are destroyed
> Like thieves condemned to perish. Ignorance
> And worldly longings, working only evil,
> By the great fire of knowledge are burnt up
> With all their mass of tangled roots. The cords
> And knots of lands, of houses, and possessions,
> And selfishness which talks of 'self' and 'mine,'
> Are severed by the weapon of my knowledge.
> The raging stream of lust which has its source
> In evil thoughts, fed by concupiscence,
> And swollen by sight's waters, is dried up
> By the bright sun of knowledge; and the forest
> Of trouble, slander, envy, and delusion,
> Is by the flame of discipline consumed.
> Now I have gained release, and this world's bonds
> Are cut asunder by the knife of knowledge.
> Thus I have crossed the ocean of the world,
> Filled with the shark-like monsters of desire,
> And agitated by the waves of passion—

Borne onward by the boat of stern resolve.
Now I have tasted the immortal truth—
Known also to unnumbered saints of yore—
That frees mankind from sorrow, pain, and death.

Of the many pleasing traits in the character of Buddha, not the least remarkable is his humility; this is indicated in the last line but one of the above extract; he never claimed the homage of his fellow-men, he never arrogated to himself a monopoly of spiritual light; he ever taught that he was but one of many Buddhas who had preceded him.

His system, as he further elaborated it, reveals very clearly a strong infusion of Hindu notions. He firmly maintained the doctrine of transmigration of souls; he recognised also the feature of retributive justice in the varying conditions of life; he taught, moreover, that, between the intervals of transmigration, human souls sojourned for definite periods in heaven or hell—according to his theory there were many heavens and not fewer than 136 hells. So far the views of Buddha accorded with the doctrines of Hinduism. As regards his conception of the origin of things, his repudiation of a personal Deity and his idea of final emanicipation, he held much in common with the philosophers of the Sankhya school; their *absorption* was with him *extinction*; but, as it may be questioned whether they really believed in an intelligent, living God, it is possible that the idea involved in both cases was much the same. Another point of distinction was also more apparent than real. Buddha rejected all notion of a divine revelation, and consequently ignored the authority of the Vedas; the *orthodox* philosophers, in terms, admitted the inspiration of those sacred books, but in their speculations they practically set them aside; reason alone ruled them.

The grand point of divergence between Buddhism and Hinduism was with regard to *caste*. There is little doubt that Gautama had long abhorred that monstrous institution, and it

is the chief glory of his system that it utterly ignores all caste distinctions. On this point the great reformer spoke in no faltering accents: 'According to my doctrine,' said he, 'there is no difference of caste; redemption from the evils of existence will be obtained by all, even by the lowest in caste, if they take the path trodden by me. No person is hindered by his birth from escaping transmigration, even already after the present life.'

The moral duties enforced by Buddha are admirable. The moral code which he propounded comprises eleven articles: five of these are negative, and six are positive injunctions. These are: 1, Kill not; 2, Steal not; 3, Lie not; 4, Commit not adultery; 5, Drink no strong drink; 6, Exercise charity and benevolence; 7, Be pure and virtuous; 8, Be patient and forbearing; 9, Be courageous; 10, Be contemplative; 11, Seek after knowledge.[1] These injunctions were of universal obligation, they bound every follower of Buddha, every aspirant to *nirvana*, no matter what his position might be. In addition to these, others of greater stringency were enjoined for the observance of priests; they were to avoid eating at improper times, not to frequent dances or theatres, not to wear ornaments or use perfumes, not to lie on too comfortable beds, not to receive from anyone gold or silver. Still more rigid observances were allotted to those who adopted the life of a religious devotee; they must wear only garments made of rags sewn with their own hands, covered with a yellow cloak; they must live on charity, but ask for nothing; must never eat more than one meal a day, and that before noon; must live in

[1] A variety of precepts are also given exemplifying the due scope of the moral code; thus the prohibition against falsehood also prohibits all coarse and offensive language; so, too, not only is patience enjoined, but meek endurance of injuries, resignation under trial, humility, penitence, confession of sin. It even appears as though some idea of expiation went with the acknowledgment of guilt. After the time of Buddha a royal edict, given, as it is thought, by Asoka, a Buddhist king of Magadha in the third century B.C., commanded the people publicly to confess their sins every five years.

the woods, with no shelter but that of the trees; must never sleep in a recumbent posture; once a month they must visit a burning or burial ground, and there reflect on the vanity of all things.

Of course, the idea was that, the greater the austerity the more rapid the progress towards the stage of *nirvana*, extinction. Here, again, a marked feature of resemblance between Buddhism and Hinduism appears; in each case meditation and mortification were enjoined as the highway to emancipation. The Buddhist sought thereby to kill desire, and, desire gone, annihilation would ensue; the Hindu aimed at utter abstraction, forgetfulness of his personal identity, and, that attained, he would lapse into the all-pervading Brahmă. But a noteworthy difference also appears—the devout Hindu said, 'All action, good and bad, necessitates future births and defers absorption, therefore I must cease from *good* deeds as well as bad; I must *do* nothing, I must *think* nothing.' The devout Buddhist said, 'I must cease from all *evil* action, but I must exercise myself to the utmost in charity, benevolence, and virtue, and thus I shall be hastened onwards towards *nirvana*.'

This brings before us the one great feature in which Buddhism stands out in striking and beautiful contrast to its more ancient rival. Hinduism—the later Hinduism which was depicted in the preceding chapter, was essentially a *selfish* system, the development of caste made it such. However devout the Hindu might be, and however zealous in his religious exercises, his one thought centred upon *self*; his own sole emancipation was the thing he cared for. Buddhism, on the contrary, enjoined a world-wide benevolence; it enforced universal charity; it set forth the common brotherhood of all mankind, it breathed kindness to every living thing—not to man only but to the meanest animal. Passing strange that a system which ignored God could be so excellent! wondrous that the fabric of morality could tower so high with no divine basis

to rest upon! But, however we may admire and wonder at the structure, experience has proved it to be, what Godless morality must ever be, a veritable 'castle in the air.' Buddhism has utterly failed in making its followers virtuous, benevolent, and unselfish. The moral excellences enjoined by Buddha are nowhere more *conspicuous by their absence* than in those lands where his religion most abounds.

In speaking of the good points of Buddha's system we must not overlook two important considerations. It would be ungenerous to Hinduism to deny that the reformer had learnt much that was morally excellent and true from the religion which he forsook; indeed, he seems not to have professed that he evolved his moral code out of his inner consciousness. The other point to be borne in mind is the natural beauty and amiability of his character; he was just one of those men to whom the path of virtue is neither rugged nor steep, who are generous and benevolent, not because they have *acquired* such a disposition, but because it is *natural* to them. With Gautama active charity was less a duty than a pleasure, and from being a pleasure it grew by cultivation to an actual passion.

Throughout the painful ordeal of his search after light, he ever had the benefit of others before him; accordingly, no sooner had he attained his object than he commenced a life of active missionary labour. He returned to his home; he instructed his father and all the members of his family in the new faith; they became his earliest disciples; but he left them, to carry the glad tidings to others; he betook himself to his former Brahman friends and communicated to them his discovery. He was sorely grieved to find that some of those whom he had loved and honoured had, during the years of his seclusion, passed away strangers to the way of deliverance.

He knew no distinctions of persons; he proclaimed his doctrines to rich and poor, to the Sudra and the Brahman alike. Marvellous success rewarded his toil and diligence. It was but

natural that the Brahmans should oppose his levelling theory; but the message of actual equality was sweet and grateful to their despised and down-trodden inferiors; no doubt, this was the grand secret of Buddha's triumph; moreover the very spectacle of the man—a king's son, traversing the country in a mendicant's garb, eschewing honours, wealth, and ease, meekly enduring reproach and contumely, consorting freely with the lowest of the low, denying himself to instruct and benefit all—must have deeply impressed his auditors and have aided their faith. The superior moral tone of his teaching must also have commended itself to the consciences of myriads to whom the learned disquisitions of Hindu philosophers were a meaningless puzzle.

But his success was not confined to the common people; a number of petty sovereigns were led to embrace and further his religion. At length, after forty-five years of unwearied toil, he passed away. The closing scene of his life was touching and remarkable; it is said that he, on a preaching tour, had walked a greater distance than he had strength for—he was eighty years of age; he had also partaken of some unwholesome food; the consequence was that he died of dysentery. He expired at Kusinagara, and his dying words were, 'All things are transient.'

Can we but admire the goodness of the man, and the zeal of the missionary, with so little in his creed to foster virtue or inspire enthusiasm? May we not venture to add, with truth, that, to modern missionaries, 'he being dead yet speaketh'?

It does not appear that Buddha left any writings behind him. After his death a council was called by the King of Magadha and a collection was made of all the teachings and sayings of the reformer; these were arranged into three sets of books, which record the doctrines, moral maxims, and metaphysical utterances of Buddha. These constitute the sacred scriptures of the Buddhists.

The new religion in the meantime continued to spread, though its progress was, no doubt, retarded by divisions and dis-

sensions which arose in the Buddhist community. Asoka grandson of Chandragupta who, after the invasion of Alexander the Great, became King of Hindustan proper) embraced Buddhism, and made it the religion of the State. This sovereign displayed the utmost zeal and devotion in furthering his adopted faith. In the eighteenth year of his reign (about 246 B.C.) he summoned a general Council; its principal objects were the improvement of religious discipline, the repression of sectarian tendencies, and a scheme for sending messengers to propagate the Buddhist creed in foreign lands.

Thus the missionary character which, by his teaching and example, the Founder of this religion had impressed upon it was developed into a scheme of foreign missionary enterprise; not only did Buddhism ignore caste distinctions in the land of his birth, it overleaped the limits of nationality, and sought to embrace the whole world. No other religion had till then appeared with cosmopolitan sympathies. Judaism had preceded Buddhism by eight centuries or more; it had lit its lamp at a heavenly source, and had embodied divine truths to which the latter system was a stranger, but surely it is one of the strange problems of the comparison, that Judaism was less liberal of its light than was Buddhism, and that, in expansive philanthropy and world-wide charity, the latter outstript the former. It is a deeply interesting fact that nearly three centuries before the divine commission was heard, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature' (Mark xvi. 15), Buddhism was sending forth its heralds to proclaim in strange lands its admirable morality, and its lifeless, godless creed.

In this way, whilst this system, like a mighty Banian tree, flourished in its native soil, it shot forth its branches into Burmah, China, Thibet, and Ceylon; in those lands the descending tendrils rapidly took root, branch after branch again spread; root after root descended, until at length the vast populations of those regions sheltered themselves under its shade. Little did

Asoka and his council—little did the zealous bands of missionaries sent forth, imagine that, the system which they were so anxious to propagate in foreign parts was doomed utterly to perish in the land of its birth; yet so it proved; rapidly as the parent stem had developed, its roots had never struck very deep into the mother soil, and so, when the storm arose, it yielded to the strain, and fell prostrate, never to rise again.

In accounting for the collapse of Buddhism in India and its triumph in other lands, various considerations must be weighed. Political changes in India helped towards the grand result. Fifty years after the death of Asoka the reins of power fell into the hands of a new dynasty inimical to the Reformer's faith. About the period of Christ's birth a Buddhist dynasty again encouraged and helped it forward. In the third century of the Christian era a Hindu dynasty rose to power; again the fortunes of Buddhism waned. In the meantime Brahmanism was marshalling its forces; for centuries had controversy raged between the two hostile systems; the Brahmans, with their usual adroitness, had tried cajolery and conciliation in the period of Buddhist predominance (Buddha, they said, was, after all, an incarnation of Vishnu); in the season of its depression they had assailed it with bitterness and spleen; they had fiercely attacked it in its most vulnerable aspect—its atheistic character. In order to popularise Hinduism they created a new literature in the Puranas, and multiplied commentaries on the Vedic ritual; they charmed the common people by the stories of Rama and Krishna. It is true the morality of Krishna and that of Buddha differed as widely as the poles; the popular conscience could not but admit that Buddha's rule was the *best*, but popular taste pronounced Krishna's the *easiest*, and most natural. Then stood out to fullest view the inherent weakness of Buddhism—if there be no God, no eternal recompense, then where are the sanctions or encouragements for well-doing? Why exercise self-restraint and forego present enjoyment if nought but annihilation face us in the future?

It is clear that, about A.D. 700, Buddhism had lost its power and prestige in India.[1] About the period of which we are speaking, two distinguished champions appeared on the Hindu side; these were Kumarila-Bhatta and Sankaracharya. The former of these wrote an able commentary on Vedic ceremonial. The latter was one of the great lights of the eclectic school of philosophy; he founded the Smârtas, a sect of the Vedantists, and wrote numerous works of great ability in support of the old system. Sankaracharya also, apparently out of regard to the prevalence of monasticism amongst the Buddhists, established a number of Hindu monasteries. Thus new life was being infused into the old system, whilst the vitality of its once vigorous rival was oozing out. Buddhism as a religious revolution—as a manly and virtuous protest against caste tyranny and priestly assumption—gained an easy victory, and carried with it the acclamations of the masses; but Buddhism as a godless creed could never find a permanent footing in India. The Hindus may be frivolous, fickle, changeful; in their religious conceptions they may be grossly inconsistent and strangely illogical; they may propound a pure morality whilst they bow down to deities who have outraged every moral principle; they may present the anomaly of being at the same time pantheists and polytheists—but if their religious history proves anything, it proves beyond a doubt that Hindus *must have a God*; this is neither more nor less than a psychological necessity of their being. They may even bring themselves, as we have before shown, to doubt their own existence; but the existence of the Deity they cannot doubt: they may make God everything and everything God, but the Hindus, as a race, can

[1] It is recorded that, about A.D. 400, Fa-hian, a Chinese Buddhist convert, paid a visit to India; his account shows that at that period Buddhism was in a prosperous condition. He was followed by another pilgrim, Sung-Gung, in the sixth century, and by a third, named Hiuen-thsang, a century later. Hiuen-thsang bewails the declension of Buddhism at that time; he declares that he found his Indian co-religionists hardly a whit in advance of the heretics by whom they were surrounded.

never tolerate the cry, 'There is no God.' A natural recoil from this cry really explains the phenomenon of the decadence and death of Buddhism in India.[1]

There is no doubt that actual and fierce persecution helped to give the death-blow to Buddhism. As the Brahmans regained political power in the country they hesitated not to employ other than polemical weapons against their adversaries; history, or perhaps *legend*, seems to show that in Southern India some thousands of Buddhists were put to death. At length, in the twelfth century, the struggle culminated in the extirpation of Buddhism, and the re-establishment of Hinduism throughout the country. Thus had the ancient religion of India victoriously surmounted the most formidable peril to which it had ever been exposed. For a time its supremacy had gone, its glory was eclipsed; but it merely bent its head to the storm and then arose from the dust erect, unscathed and vigorous as ever. The battle had been fierce and long; surely the fact that Hinduism survived the arduous struggle must indicate the singular vitality of that system—must show that

[1] The fact that, though Buddhism has been expelled from the land of its birth, it has found a home in an empire like China and elsewhere, is no doubt remarkable, but two things help to account for this. In the first place, as regards the Chinese, no one can have visited China, after sojourning in India, without feeling that he has passed at once into a new atmosphere; it is impossible to conceive a greater contrast than appears between the characteristics of the two peoples; and you are compelled to feel that the differences are *essential*, not accidental, that they are not so much the consequences of differing moral and religious training, but natural and constitutional differences. You find the Chinese in all matters of business, keen, intelligent, ingenious, plodding; in these respects they cast the Hindus into the shade; but you search in vain in China for the deep spiritual yearnings and the contemplative tone which so strongly mark the people of India. *Those* are of the earth, earthy; *these* at least pant after something higher and better. Thus a godless faith was a possibility in China. But it is a singular illustration of the truth that even the least religious of human kind must have some object of worship, that in China and other Buddhist countries gods of various kinds are honoured; religious homage is paid to them and temporal benefits are sought at their hands; relics too are kept and worshipped—all which is, of course, opposed to primitive Buddhist teaching.

its earth-born adversary had utterly failed to pierce the joints of that armour which so effectually shielded its hidden life.

Necessarily the banished system left certain traces of its influence behind; Hinduism was not exactly the same thing that it had been; the ancient institution of sacrifice was never restored to its primitive ideal; the dogma of transmigration was strengthened and expanded; and in connection with this dogma, which teaches the possibility of human souls inhabiting the bodies of animals, Buddhism inculcated and left behind it a habit of kindly regard for the whole brute creation.

The small sect called Jains is the sole relic of the Buddhist community in India. Their original founder was a royal prince called Parswanath. They first appeared in South Behar (Magadha), in the second century of the Christian era.[1] Some two hundred and fifty years later Mahavira was born of the same stock. He taught a more rigid discipline than had before prevailed; his followers, like himself, are ascetics; they are called *Digambaras*, 'clad in space,' or 'naked.' The followers of Parswanath are called *Svetambaras*, 'clothed in white.' These, according to their founder's practice, should always wear but one white cloth; the others, if they copied their teacher's example, would wear no clothing at all; at the present day neither the one party nor the other strictly observes the prescribed rule. The term Jain comes from the word *Jina*, which means 'a conquering saint,' one who has vanquished self and desire. The Jains say there have been, in all, twenty-four Jinas; Parswanath and Mahavira were the two last of these. They agree with the Buddhists in rejecting the Hindu Vedas; but they have a sacred literature of their own, distinct from that which records the teachings of Buddha. They

[1] The Jains claim for themselves a much higher antiquity; indeed, they maintain that they were anterior to Buddhism; their chronology, however, is throughout unreliable. The precise period of their origin cannot be determined, but the burden of evidence seems to point to the era specified.

believe in the eternity of matter and mind, and, like the Buddhists, ignore the idea of a Supreme Being. The chief points of their difference from the Buddhists consist in their worshipping the Jinas and in according a sort of inferior homage to certain Hindu deities, Brahmā, Vishnu, Siva, and Gonesa. Their object in adoring the twenty-four Jinas is to obtain their help in attaining to emancipation; they consider that, in addition to their individual efforts, the mediation of the Jinas may greatly facilitate their ultimate deliverance.

There is no doubt that the Jains have been gradually receding from the Buddhist type; they are drawing nearer their Hindu brethren in their sympathies and practices. Already the Brahmans exercise a growing influence over them; they uphold certain caste distinctions, and in many of their temples employ Brahmans to perform their religious ceremonies. It is not, therefore, unreasonable to suppose that Jainism will, in time, be absorbed into the orthodox Hindu system. It is estimated that at the present time the members of this sect in the whole of the Bengal provinces do not amount to one hundred thousand.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MOHAMMEDAN ERA.

'And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men . . . and they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails' (Rev. ix. 7, 10).

ISLAM followed in the wake of Buddhism. Hinduism, after centuries of bitter strife, had crushed and banished its atheistic rival; but the shouts of triumph and the songs of victory had not died out before another formidable foe appeared on the field. Another religious duel was to be fought; the ancient creed of India had vanquished a heretical offshoot of its own, could it as successfully cope with a foreign faith?—a faith which, like itself abhorred atheism, but which, unlike itself, denounced all idolatry—a faith which, like its vanquished foe, denied caste distinctions, but which, unlike that foe, permitted present, and promised eternal, gratification—a gratification as sensuous and sensual as human nature could well desire? Hinduism was evidently to pass through a more trying ordeal than that which she had just survived. It will be the aim of this chapter to describe the struggle which ensued and to trace its issue.

How it may be with the reader we know not, but, as we enter on this subject, we cannot but experience a rush of solemn and weighty reflections, akin to those which occupied our minds when we contemplated the rise and progress of the mighty system treated of in the last chapter. Inscrutable are Thy ways, most mighty God!—inscrutable in what Thou *permittest* no less than in what Thou doest! Taking Calvary as our stand-

point, what a marvellous panorama spreads out behind us and before us! what a strange retrospect! what an amazing prospect! The glorious transaction on that mount—a transaction on which the world's salvation depends, appears midway between the two. Six centuries *before* that event we see an anxious, troubled soul retiring to the gloomy solitude of a forest in search of light and peace; after years of painful thought we behold him issue forth with his dreary, cheerless creed—a creed professed in our day by one third of the human race. Six centuries *after* the grand event spoken of, we see another doubting, restless soul, retiring to a cave in an Arabian mountain. After five years of strange experiences he too burst upon the world as the propounder of a new faith, and that faith now numbers 160 millions of followers. How the mind yearns, but yearns in vain, to look behind the veil, to trace out, not only those wondrous and momentous events, but the position they occupy in the providential scheme of Him who is the righteous King of the whole earth! Again are we hushed to silence. 'Be still and know that I am God.'

In dealing with the contact of Hinduism with Mohammedanism it will give interest and perspicuity to the view presented if we first briefly sketch the origin and character of the religion of the Arabian prophet. It seems desirable, moreover, that some account should be given of such of the sects of Islam as have figured in that part of Indian history to which the present chapter relates.

What we said as to the origin of Buddhism may be averred with equal truth of Mohammedanism—it was the *outcome of the age* rather than the evolution of an individual; it was the legitimate upshot of influences and tendencies which had been operating long before they assumed that concrete shape which Mohammed gave them. Different as the two religions are, they came to the birth under very similar circumstances. In the one case primitive Hinduism had been corrupted; the prevalence of superstition, priestcraft, caste tyranny, and rationalistic specula-

tion, had unsettled the minds of thoughtful men; a more or less audible cry for reform was rising from many an anxious breast—Buddhism was the response to that cry. In the other case, the once pure and simple monotheism of Arabia had gradually faded away into nature-worship; that, again, had lapsed into gross idolatry; the eclipse of religious truth and faith was attended by a deteriorating standard of morals; infanticide and polyandry were results and evidences of the downward tendency; then it was that a cry for light and deliverance began to be heard. Mohammed himself was one of the nobler spirits who groaned under the national apostasy, and longed for some mode of emancipation—some scheme of religious and moral elevation. And as Buddhism, though a revolt against Hinduism, derived many of its leading features from that system, so did Mohammedanism gather up into itself and reflect the various hues of religious thought which prevailed in the land of its birth. As an eclectic system of religion Mohammedanism was infinitely more successful than was its predecessor in India. Buddhism appropriated several important elements of Hinduism, but it rejected the one which was vital—faith in a personal God, and thus it sealed its own doom. Mohammedanism formed an ingenious amalgamation of the three prevailing systems of Arabia—Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity; the former constituted the basis for its institutions and observances, the two latter were the repertory from which its doctrines were mainly derived. Unhappily for himself and unfortunately for the world, Mohammed drew his waters from a poisoned stream; he encountered a Judaism debased by Talmudic puerilities and a Christianity degraded and overlaid by human inventions. One cannot but ask how different the upshot might have been had Christian truth presented itself to the enquiring mind of Mohammed in its pristine truth and beauty.

The Arabian nation traces its origin to two sources; the Joktanian Arabs look back to Joktan, the great-great-grandson

of Shem, as their forefather; the Ishmaelite Arabs date their origin from Ishmael, the son of Abraham by the Egyptian handmaid Hagar. Amongst the former branch we find the ancient kingdom of the Sabæans. Tradition states that the Queen of Sheba who went to test the wisdom of Solomon was a ruler of that kingdom. But divine promises had pointed to the supremacy of the later branch (Gen. xvi. 10; xvii. 20; xxi. 18). Accordingly we find the Ishmaelites commingling with surrounding races and gradually impressing their character upon them. In this way they seem in time to have comprehended not only the Joktanian Arabs, but the Midianites and the Idumæans, and to have established an undisputed ascendency in the land.

There can be little doubt that, as with the earliest Aryan settlers in India, so with the early Arabs, they had ideas of the Deity comparatively pure and simple and true. This circumstance is less remarkable in the case of the Arabians than in that of the Aryans; we can more readily indicate the sources of light in that case than in this. How much independent light the Joktanians possessed we know not, but the Ishmaelites sprang from Abraham 'the friend of God,' and their accession, we can well imagine, brought with it decided traces of light and truth. If we bear in mind too, what there is no reason to doubt, that the inspired book of Job was written in Arabia, and that Moses spent the second forty years of his life in that country, we see that the ancestors of Mohammed enjoyed special religious advantages. The sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness must have been marked by intercourse with the people of the land, and though that intercourse would not be an unmixed good, still the wondrous miracles which God wrought for His people at that time, the public worship of Jehovah in the tabernacle surmounted with the abiding pillar of glory, the presence of 'Moses and Aaron among His saints'—these and other influences must have been salutary and instructive to the

Arabians. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, a prince and priest of the country, was doubtless one of many who profited by those advantages. The testimony borne in the Bible to the piety and zeal of the Rechabites, one of the tribes of Arabia, shows that the true God was known and worshipped among that people.

There can be little doubt that, as in India so in Arabia, the first step in the downward course was the worship of the heavenly bodies. From regarding these objects as symbols of the true God, the Arabians as well as the Aryans, by a natural transition, came to honour them as actual deities. In each case, in all probability, the transition was accomplished by almost imperceptible degrees, an idea of a Supreme Deity remaining long after the people had come to fall down to 'gods many and lords many.' A remarkable passage in the Book of Job shows that even in the days of that patriarch the leaven of physiolatry was working: 'If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the Judge; for I should have denied the God that is above' (Job xxxi. 26–28). That Job herein indicates and censures the growing evil, few will doubt; but the allusion to the action of the Judge implies that nature-worship was at that period more or less an *illicit* practice; it only required time to make that and much grosser forms of worship universal in the land. Idol temples and altars were set up in all parts of the country.

The principal sanctuary, called the Kaabâ, was in the city of Mecca. This famous temple, which was the grand centre of Pagan worship, and which maintained its pre-eminence after the conversion of the nation to Islam, was a simple square edifice, with little adornment. It contained, however, no fewer than 360 idols; it had also an object of remarkable virtue and sanctity—this was a black stone, to which the Pagan Arabs showed special devotion; every pilgrim kissed it and believed

that contact with it in some way relieved him of his sins. The simple worshippers asserted that the stone was originally white, but that it had become black by absorbing the sins of men. Tradition attributed the building of the Kaabà to Abraham himself, and it was said to stand near the spot where the patriarch had gone to offer up his son, that son not being Isaac, but Ishmael. Ishmael is said to have introduced the sacred stone. The adjoining well of Zamzen was likewise said to have been the fountain from which Hagar and her son had quenched their thirst[1] (Gen. xxi. 19).

Mecca was thus to the Pagan Arabs the holiest place on earth; pilgrims flocked to it from all parts of the country; an important feature of the worship prescribed consisted in compassing again and again the holy Kaabà. The rite of circumcision was universally practised, abstinence from wine was enjoined, oaths were made in the name of the national religion; amongst colours, *green* was ever the favourite with the Pagan Arabs. These and many more features of the olden times Mohammed sagaciously imported into his own system. The 360 idols of the Kaabà were demolished, truly; but the sacred stone still remains an object of intense veneration to the thousands of Mussulman pilgrims, who, from all parts of the world, wend their way to the holy city. The mosque which is built over the Kaabà is compassed by the pilgrims as was done of

[1] These traditions sufficiently account for the superior sanctity which attached to the temple at Mecca—a sanctity which it still retains in the eyes of all good Mussulmans. One of the most curious instances of legendary localisation extant is furnished by the notions of the Samaritans of the present day. They believe that Paradise stood on the summit of Mount Gerizim, that out of its dust Adam was formed; places are indicated on which the holy Seth erected altars; Gerizim, moreover, is the Ararat of Genesis on which the Ark rested; there too are the remains of Noah's altar shown with seven steps, on each of which they say he offered a sacrifice; nor is the very altar on which Isaac was bound wanting; yea, the very thicket in which the ransoming ram was caught is pointed out; and the marvellous aggregation is completed by the presence of the very spot on which Jacob slept and saw the ladder reaching up to heaven!—so that doubtless much more than appears was involved in the utterance of the woman of Samaria, 'Our fathers worshipped in this mountain' (John iv. 20).

yore, and the pilgrim of to-day believes he receives spiritual benefits by a visit to Mecca quite analogous to those which the Pagan Arabs looked for.

In a former chapter we noted a peculiar feature of the Hindus in their present polytheistic state; it is that, in ordinary conversation, they ever speak as monotheists; although they acknowledge countless deities, they speak as though God were one. The same feature seems to have obtained amongst the Arabs of old; at the very time when they were bowing down to hundreds of gods of wood and stone, there was the following form of prayer common amongst them: 'I dedicate myself to Thy service, O God! Thou hast no companion, except Thy companion, of whom Thou art absolute Master, and of whatever is his.'[1] It is thus evident that the famous formula of Mohammedan faith was but the antitype and almost a re-echo of the confession used long before Mohammed appeared. The Kalima put forth by the prophet, the repetition of which is enforced by the most awful obligations and encouraged by the most important promises, runs thus: 'There is no other God but God, and Mohammed is the messenger of God.'

It cannot be doubted that, over and above the dissatisfaction felt by numbers of thoughtful Arabs towards the national idolatry, the presence of numerous bodies of Jews and Christians in the country would be a disturbing and unsettling element. The descendants of Ishmael found themselves in daily contact with persons professing two creeds mutually antagonistic, yet each agreeing with their own as to certain great religious facts of history; each creed claimed to be divine, whilst each denounced the other, and both united in condemning the prevailing Pagan worship. The Jewish and Christian sections of the community were not only numerous, but possessed considerable political power. At times, indeed, their respective

[1] Quoted by Dr. Arnold in his *Islam and Christianity*, from the writings of Abulfarag.

influence overpowered that of the Pagan section; and instances actually occurred of, now a Jew and now a Christian, attaining to regal dignity. All these things must be taken into the account if we would estimate the various agencies which operated in calling into being and giving a complexion to the creed of Islam. 'What is truth?' was the enquiry of many a perplexed and troubled soul; a general impression was felt by such persons that each of the rival creeds contained the elements of truth largely commingled with and obscured by error; who was to separate the gold from the dross? who would restore the pure and simple faith of their father Abraham?

Some years before Mohammed appeared, a large meeting of the Koreishites, the tribe to which he belonged, was held.[1] At that gathering some of the earnest souls spoken of were present; four of them held a private conference, and found that they thought and felt alike. 'Our fellow-countrymen,' said they, 'are in a wrong path, they are far astray from the religion of Abraham. What is this pretended divinity, to which they immolate victims, and around which they make solemn processions? a dumb and senseless block of stone, incapable of good and evil. It is all a mistake; seek we the pure religion of our father Abraham; to find it, if need be, let us quit our country, and traverse foreign lands.' Three of those enquirers actually set out on their journey in search of truth; they were ultimately received into the Christian Church. The story of the fourth is very touching and suggestive; his heathen relatives prevented his going with his friends, and they were sorely distressed at his growing estrangement from the national faith. Zaid, for such was his name, found his only relief in prayer; he daily visited the Kaabâ, and cried to God for enlightenment; there he might be seen leaning with his back against the wall of the temple, and reiterating the petition: 'Lord, if I knew in what way

[1] For the following deeply interesting facts we are indebted to Dr. Arnold's *Islam and Christianity*, pp. 35, 36.

Thou didst will to be adored and served, I would obey Thy will; but I know it not.' Nothing, to our mind, is more affecting than cries like this going up from dark souls panting for light and peace; how many of such cries are even now going up from the gloomy regions of heathendom only the Lord God of Sabaoth, who prompts and listens to such cries, can tell. Are not such cries answered?—answered *how*, we know not, but answered in love and mercy by Him who has declared, 'If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine' (John vii. 17).

The conduct of Zaid beautifully exemplified his earnestness and sincerity. He determined to act up to his limited knowledge; if he knew not the full truth, he would at least raise his voice against what he knew to be false; accordingly he protested against many of the prevailing superstitions of the day. Like certain scrupulous Christians in the days of St. Paul, he warned all men against eating flesh offered to idols; he also vigorously denounced the inhuman practice of destroying female infants. It was his glory and privilege to suffer for well-doing—his uncle shut him up in prison; after a time he escaped from his confinement, and disconsolately wandered from place to place. During his wanderings the tidings reached him that an Arabian prophet was preaching the pure faith of Abraham at Mecca; this prophet was Mohammed; he had issued from his seclusion, and was proclaiming himself a messenger sent from God. These strange tidings fired the eager soul of Zaid; immediately he turned his face towards the holy city, but he was never to reach that spot, he was never to listen to the pleadings of the self-sent messenger; he was robbed and murdered on the road. Had he arrived at Mecca, can we doubt that, heart and soul, he would have thrown himself into the dubious movement? and shall we not say that 'God took him, having provided some better thing for him'?

It is easy to see that the existence in that era of men like

Zaid goes far to account for the origin and success of Mohammed's teaching.

This brings us to the prophet himself. Sadly chequered and trying was the early history of Mohammed; he came of a princely line, but his family was poor. He was born in the year 571 A.D. When he was but two months old his father died; his mother Amena, gave the child to Halema, a Beduin woman, to nurse. According to agreement the nurse restored the child to his mother when he was two years of age; Halema, however, seems to have been attached to the infant and craved permission to retain him a little longer; her request was granted; but, to the surprise of all, at the end of two months she brought back the child and refused to keep him any longer; she said she believed him to be possessed with evil spirits. The truth is, epilepsy had developed itself, and the fits were attributed to those malignant agents. This infirmity characterised Mohammed up to man's estate, and, as it will be seen, constituted a not unimportant feature in his subsequent religious evolution.

At the age of six his mother died; this threw him on the protection of his grandfather; but the poor orphan was to pass from hand to hand; two years later the death of his grandfather threw him upon the care of an uncle. He subsequently took a journey with his uncle to Bussora. History states that the party accepted the hospitality of a Christian monk named Bahïra, who foretold the coming greatness of the child. At sixteen he is seen travelling with another uncle; at twenty he figures on a field of battle. From that period up to his twenty-fifth year he seems to have lived as a shepherd in the neighbourhood of Mecca. After a time he accepted a post as mercantile agent to a rich widow named Khadija. Whilst in her service he made journeys to Syria and elsewhere. The utmost integrity and diligence seem to have marked him in the discharge of his duties. The result was that he not only gained the confidence

but the affection of his mistress, and she offered him her hand and heart. At this time Mohammed was less than twenty-six years of age, whilst Khadija had seen forty summers. The future prophet, however, saw in this disparity no bar to the proposed union. They were married.

Commercial misfortunes followed his marriage, and ultimately he lost all his property. What effect this reverse had upon him we are left to conjecture; it will hardly be doubted that this was one link in the chain of events which was leading him to the momentous issue. From his thirty-fifth to his fortieth year he lived much in retirement and frequently resorted to a cave in Mount Hara; generally he remained there in solitude; sometimes he was accompanied by Khadija. What transpired during those visits we know not; it is quite supposable that for a considerable period no definite scheme, no ambitious project, loomed on the horizon of his vision; we can quite believe, and see no reason for doubting, that many a time, with a burdened, restless, anxious spirit, he sought solace in solitary musings and devout breathings. We have no sympathy with those who can discern no other aspect of Mohammed than that of a hypocrite and impostor; apart from the uncharitableness of this view, it utterly fails to account for all the phenomena which meet us in his religious history. We prefer to regard the prophet, in the opening of that history at least, as sincere and ingenuous, as conscious of an honest feeling after light and truth. At what particular moment the pellucid flow of his thoughts and desires contracted the first slight taint of mixed motives—to what degree, as the stream became more and more turbid, he was self-deceived, or a conscious deceiver, or both, it is not for us to pronounce. We simply give the facts as they present themselves to us.

Mohammed was in his fortieth year when he had the first alleged vision of the angel Gabriel. It was during repeated angelic visitations he received, as he professed, the divine reve-

lations which are embodied in the Koran. It has already been stated that from infancy he was subject to epileptic attacks, and from the description given by eye-witnesses and others of his condition at the time of receiving those divine communications, it seems impossible to doubt that he was at such times suffering from spasmodic affections of that nature; they speak of him as trembling, foaming at the mouth, and uttering loud cries 'like a young camel.' The popular idea attributed all such convulsions to demoniacal possession, and it seems unquestionable that Mohammed shared the popular impression; he believed himself to be possessed. Some time before the period of which we are speaking he had actually sought deliverance through the efforts of an exorcist; and there seems to be the strongest ground for believing that, for some time after the visions commenced, he suspected that the excitement of which he was the subject was occasioned by occult and malignant agency. This fact, whilst it shows his liability to superstitious delusion, rebuts the idea of designed imposition. Strange to say, a Christian priest named Waraka, a cousin of Khadija the wife of the prophet, was a main instrument in removing the impression of diabolical influence from the mind of Mahommed. He and Khadija together succeeded in satisfying the prophet that his strange visitants in the solitary cave were from *above* and not from beneath.

Mohammed, thus convinced and relieved, stood forth as a divinely accredited messenger, as the medium of a new revelation and the reformer of the national faith. There can be little doubt that at this period the prophet contemplated nothing beyond a national reformation; the idea of giving a new faith to the world was a later conception; it was the result of unlooked-for success in working out the original programme. Accordingly we find that in the earliest draught of his scheme he fights neither with small nor great, save only with national corruptions; he denounces idolatry, proclaims

in uncompromising tones the unity of God, and boldly rebukes certain prevalent vices. In those early days, when asked by an enquirer respecting his faith and doctrine, he merely replied that, 'he taught men to worship one God, to requite kindness to parents, not to kill children or any other person, to shun every crime, not to touch the goods of orphans, and to keep promises.'[1] His attitude towards Jews and Christians at that period was courteous and friendly; he affirmed that the revelations which were vouchsafed to him were in no sense meant to supersede the divine authority of the Old and New Testament; he too, as a prophet, was only one of the many prophets who, from the days of Abraham, had appeared. Of Jesus he spake as the 'Messiah,' 'the Word of God,' 'the Word of Truth,' 'the Spirit of God.' He also admitted His miraculous conception. In order to conciliate and gain the suffrages of these two powerful sections of the community he made important concessions: the Jews might celebrate Mosaic ordinances, keep their sabbath, observe their fasts and pray with their faces towards Jerusalem. He seems to have been even more cordial and liberal to the Christians; indeed, he began by adopting the ceremonial of baptism in admitting his converts.

All these concessions were withdrawn as time advanced, and a far more rigid and dominant tone began to characterise the later teachings of the prophet. Growing power and widespread success led to loftier and more extensive claims; not only must idolatry be subdued, 'the men of the Book' must be subjugated too. The earlier revelations of Mohammed accorded with the modesty of his pretensions; but the element of coercion was sanctioned when the means of exercising it were achieved. Obstinate idolaters were to be slain, and Christians and Jews who refused to acknowledge the religious supremacy of the prophet, were to be subjected to tribute. The changing

[1] Arnold's *Islam and Christianity*.

tone and accommodating aspect of those advancing revelations constitute, without doubt, the most suspicious feature in the case. Probably no one would have been more astonished than Mohammed himself had he been told, in his earlier and better days, that he would promulgate as the decree of Heaven the following fiery injunction: 'Fight for the religion of God against those who fight against you . . . kill them wherever you find them . . . fight against them till there be no temptation to idolatry and the religion be God's.'

The dubious feature of accommodation in those so-called divine communications is nowhere more remarkable than in their bearing upon Mohammed's matrimonial relations. The original instructions on the subject of marriage allowed but four wives to each believer. It may fairly be assumed that, when this law was proclaimed, Mohammed purposed a loyal allegiance to it himself. He knew not his own weakness. Up to the age of fifty he had but one wife; Khadija then died; before a month elapsed he married again; another and another wife was added to his domestic circle, until at length the prescribed limit had been exceeded. But a special revelation gave the messenger of God a dispensation which justified his conduct![1] At his death he left nine widows to bewail him; he had buried two of his wives before. He had besides a number of concubines amongst his slaves. Some time before his death a revelation restricted him to the wives he already possessed, but, strange to say, at the time of his death he was engaged to marry another.

The divine communications contained in the Koran were received by the prophet at different periods, and on various occasions during the last twenty-three years of his life. They

[1] One of the darkest features of his history was his marriage of Zeinab, the wife of a slave he had liberated, named Zaid. Mohammed persuaded the husband to divorce his wife, that he might be able to possess her. Finding that scandal was occasioned thereby, he published a special licence from heaven authorising the proceeding.

were originally written on scraps of parchment, leather, palm-leaves, stones, shoulder-blades, and other materials. It was not until after the death of the prophet that these were collected and the Koran compiled. To those scattered records were added numbers of unwritten sayings of the prophet which had dwelt in the memories of his followers. The result was not satisfactory; this first version of the Koran was so full of discrepancies and became such a source of discord to the faithful that the Kaliph Othman had a new and revised edition prepared; he then, to ensure harmony of teaching and belief for the future, ordered every copy of the previous edition to be destroyed; an order which seems to have been successfully carried out. The effect of this judicious proceeding was, no doubt, to lessen the chaotic aspect of the Koran, but it left a sufficiently appalling residuum of confusion and contradiction, a residuum which all the labours of learned doctors for twelve centuries past have not been able to reduce to order. Indeed, those Mohammedan commentators have agreed that there are at least 225 passages so mutually contradictory and irreconcilable that they resist all attempts to bring them within a reasonable harmony of the book. To surmount this grave difficulty, they have adopted, with régard to these incorrigible texts, the theory of *abrogation*; they say that, when two texts are mutually at variance, the latest in the order of revelation was meant to abrogate and supersede the former. But this solution, ingenious as it may be, is far from settling the difficulty; no sooner does the question of chronology arise than the doctors flounder in the depths of inextricable confusion; the Koran has hardly any certified chronological data to guide the enquirer. The notion of abrogation has, no doubt, traditional ground to rest upon, though most impartial minds would wonder at the precedent. On one occasion a friend wrote down from the lips of Mohammed a verse containing a divine revelation; on the following morning the friend found to his

surprise it had been erased; he asked the prophet an explanation of the matter, and received the answer that the communication 'had been taken back to heaven'!

Viewed as a literary production the Koran is allowed to possess great merit: even infidel scholars admit, what the doctors of Islam maintain, the excellence of the work in respect of language and style; but the extraordinary anachronisms and historical and scientific blunders, besides errors of a graver nature, which disfigure the book, are as conclusive against the information and enlightenment of the author as against its supernatural claims. Pharaoh and Haman are said to have been contemporaries, and the Virgin Mary is said to be the sister of Aaron, the first High Priest! Alexander the Great is described as a follower of the true God, erroneous accounts are given of his expeditions, and he is said to have reached the spot where the sun sets; he found the orb of day rested at night *in a spring of black mud!* The following passage gives some idea of the extraordinary puerilities of the Koran: 'If you hear a cock crow, pray for mercy, for it has seen an angel; but when you hear an ass bray take refuge in God, for the ass has seen a devil'! But such instances are *legion.* It has been well remarked that if the Koran, though the work of but one person, abounds with so many errors and contradictions, what would have been the case if, like the Bible, it had been composed by a multitude of different authors, in different countries and eras?

If Mohammed's theology was somewhat better than his science and chronology, it was because he had better sources of information to draw upon. The teaching of the Old and New Testaments, reflected in the uncertain mirrors of the Talmud and the Apocryphal Gospels, together with floating traditions of both Jews and Christians, were these sources.[1] In the doctrinal system

[1] That Mohammed imported very much both of fact and doctrine from these sources into his system, may be clearly proved from the Koran itself; doubtless he

of Mohammed the unity of God and absolute submission to His will constitute its grand fundamental dogmas—the centre round which everything else revolves. The character and attributes of Deity are well, though not perfectly, described. He is shown to be almighty, omnipresent, omniscient, and merciful; but, strange to say, that which in the Bible is His most prominent characteristic—moral perfection and holiness—is wanting in the Koran. The doctrine of a resurrection, of a general judgment, of eternal rewards and punishments, of the ministration of angels, and the reappearance of Christ at the end of the world, were fully proclaimed by the prophet of Mecca.[1]

The ethical system of Mohammed, except in the vital principle of its recognising a personal God, is not more elevated than was that of Buddha. Indeed, it is far more lenient to the sensual infirmities of man than was the code of the stern recluse of India. In another important feature, too, it was inferior to the code of the Indian reformer. Buddha's charity and morality

learned much from personal intercourse with Jews and Christians. We can well conceive that with all honesty of conviction he received from them the grand fundamental truths after which he and many others had been feeling; and though it may be difficult to acquit him of conscious duplicity in the later development of his scheme, still who would deny that, though not divinely sent, he was still *divinely used*—used in ameliorating the foulness of heathen faith and practice—used too in chastising a corrupt Church and a degenerate Christianity?]

[1] Those points which constitute the very essence of Christianity Mohammed carefully excluded from his eclectic system. The Trinity, the deity of Christ, his vicarious atonement, his death and resurrection—all these things he repudiated and controverted. He denounces with especial emphasis the doctrine of a Triune Jehovah; but he had obtained a most confused idea of that sacred verity, for the notion he combats is the conception that the Trinity consisted of the Father, the Son, and the *Blessed Virgin!* It may well be believed that this erroneous view was more the misfortune than the fault of Mohammed. The worship of the Virgin had in that era become so prominent and universal in the Christian Church that the notion that she was regarded as a divine being had only too much ground to support it; indeed, there seems to have actually existed in Arabia a heretical body of Christians whose idea of the Trinity was precisely that which Mohammed controverts. He gets over the recorded death of Christ by saying that some other person suffered in his stead, whilst Jesus was translated to heaven. Here, again, he was probably merely following the erroneous teaching of two other Christian sects which before his time had put forth the very same idea—these were the | the Cerinthians.

embraced all mankind. The Koran teaches kindness, charity, and even the forgiveness of injuries; but the obligation does not extend beyond the family of the faithful. Mohammedanism knows nothing of universal love and benevolence.

A fundamental defect in the system of Mohammed is the want of a due sense of sin. Nowhere is it spoken of in the Koran as *per se* a great moral evil. No idea of original sin exists. Confused notions of man's primeval state appear; it is said that God made man a free agent to choose between right and wrong, but He endued him at the same time with *evil* inclinations as well as with good. An inadequate perception of the nature of sin goes far to explain the character both of Mohammed and of his religion. It accounts for much that was crooked, vacillating, and morally wrong in his conduct; his standard was sufficiently low to admit of his practising certain things, without conscious hypocrisy, which, with the Christian standard, must have fixed that brand upon him. This explains, too, the absence of holiness as the distinguishing attribute of the Deity; it accounts, moreover, for the easy terms of pardon and salvation prescribed by the Koran. Contrition of spirit, inward purity, assimilation to the Divine image, are not insisted upon; a man has only to believe in God and the prophet, observe the five stated turns of prayer, give alms, keep the fast of the Ramazan, and perform himself, or by deputy, the pilgrimage to Mecca, and his salvation is assured to him. Prayer, again, instead of being the hallowed outgoing of the soul's devotion, is a mere mechanical exercise; it is not even necessary that the sense of the prayers should be understood; two things alone are necessary—they must be repeated and must be said in the Arabic tongue.[1] Of fasting,

[1] Attitude and posture during prayer are also matters of vital importance. An amusing illustration of this occurred some years ago in the Madrissah, the Mahommedan College in Calcutta. As the English Resident Professor was one evening taking his rounds through the College, sounds of fierce contention reached his ears. He bent his steps to the room whence the uproar proceeded, and found

Mohammed says, 'It is the gate of religion, and the breath of him that fasteth is more grateful to God than that of musk.' The thirty days' fast of the Ramazan is the main feature of self-mortification that Islam prescribes, but its severity is less real than apparent when it is remembered that the abstinence of the day may be followed by any amount of feasting through the night. Compared with the stern asceticism of devout Hindoos, the religious privations of the Mohammedans are singularly mild; whilst a degree of indulgence is permitted to the latter which the former would censure and shrink from.

The absence of a higher tone of spirituality than the natural man desiderates, the profession of certain truths which, more or less, underlie all religions, the prescription of a lenient morality, and the appointment of a ritual in which the body more than the mind, and the memory more than the soul, are exercised, are four characteristics of Islam, important to be borne in mind in estimating its progress, whether in India or elsewhere. There is still another feature which must not be overlooked; the eternal rewards of the faithful are precisely such as accord with the general character of the religion. The glory and bliss of the Mohammedan Paradise are nothing more than earthly sheen and sensual enjoyment intensified; each of

that a number of the students were discussing in the most excited way the orthodox *position of the heels* during the time of prayer. One of the students had discovered some learned authority for praying with the heels closed; his own convictions coincided with th s ruling, accordingly he declared himself the champion of the *closed-heel* theory: but the majority of his co-students denounced such teaching as a detestable innovation, and a loathsome heresy. They declared that, not only must closed-heels utterly nullify the effect of prayer, but persistence in such a pernicious usage must inevitably sink the soul to perdition. Of course, the *closed-heelers* predicated the same terrible consequences of the opposite usage! You smile, good reader, at such senseless puerilities—perhaps good Moslems might reciprocate the smile when they see the awful importance which some amongst us attach to posture, position, and sacerdotal attire; and perhaps they might retort with the query, 'If the efficacy of your holiest rites depend on these *externals*, then why may not the virtue of our devotions hang upon the deep mystical import of our closed or open heels?' *Vide* Dr. Hunter's *Our Indian Mussulmans*, p. 203.

the faithful, decked with glorious robes, adorned with precious gems, bracelets of gold, and a crown of pearl, shall disport himself with a multitude of ravishing damsels, now roaming through the enchanting bowers of Eden, now reclining on silken carpets and luxurious couches, now quaffing the delicious beverages, and revelling in the tempting viands of that celestial abode!

Such is Mohammedanism. That a religion so essentially of the earth, earthy, should make its way in the world is no great marvel; unlike Christianity, it had no quarrel with human nature as it is, it called for no moral renewal, enforced no painful ordeal of self-subjugation; nay, it gained the suffrages of humanity by according the high sanction of heaven to its infirmities. It, like Christianity, had to struggle against prevalent systems of idolatry, but, whilst the religion of Jesus achieved its peaceful triumphs by patient endurance, by the power of persuasion, by the spectacle of heroic martyrdoms, by the force of truth, Mohammedanism rode rough-shod over all obstacles; carnal in its character, its victories were won by carnal weapons; the embattled hosts of the faithful were its missionaries; idols, idol shrines, and idolatrous hosts were overthrown by the might of their arm. Whilst Christianity inspired its meek champions with the courage of non-resistance, Islam fired the ardour of its militant heroes by the assurance of a vast augmentation of the material joys of Paradise to every one who died fighting for the faith.[1]

[1] In connection with the prophet's enunciations on this head, a peculiar anecdote is recorded; he had ruled that those who did not actually fight for the faith should, on that account, suffer a diminution of heavenly joys; he drew a hard and fast line, making no exceptions whatever. It happened that one of his attendants ventured to suggest that exceptions might well be made in the case of the blind and of others who were physically disabled from military service. The common sense and simple justice of this remark evidently struck the prophet, and, forthwith, a new revelation appeared, making the very exceptions suggested! No doubt the facile and convenient nature of many of Mohammed's professed communications from heaven bears a suspicious aspect. Probably some years ago we should have gone with such of our readers as are disposed to see nought but

Very different is the story of the propagation of that faith in the earlier and later days of the prophet. For the first twelve years of his mission he dwelt in Mecca and laboured to advance his claims by simple teaching and persuasion. He encountered fierce opposition; the men of his own tribe, the Koreishites, were his bitterest foes. They had considerable vested interests in the national idolatry; their animosity was, doubtless, less the offspring of devotion than of selfish considerations—their craft was endangered by the prophet's teaching. Plots were formed for his destruction and a price was put upon his head. But for the kindness of an uncle, who sheltered him, though he rejected his claims, Mohammed would certainly have fallen a victim to the violence of his adversaries. As it was, his courage signally failed him, and, with the hope of conciliating his foes, he agreed to restore the idols to the position of mediators with God. He afterwards recalled this concession, and admitted it to have been a suggestion of Satan.

At length the prophet fled from the scene of his trials; his peaceful efforts at Mecca had been rewarded with such slender results as to make it more than probable that, without other and more *forcible* influences to aid it, his religion would have

trickery and imposition in these dubious proceedings; as it is, we are inclined to put in a plea in arrest of judgment. In the first place, it is hard to reconcile the notion of sheer hypocrisy with the uniform earnestness and undoubted devotion of the prophet. The singular simplicity also of his mode of life up to the very end of his career rebuts such a harsh imputation. At the very time when armies did his bidding and admiring thousands paid him homage, he cooked his own food, milked his own goats, wore a simple woollen cap and two plain linen garments, and slept on a mattress of straw. Indeed, the more one contemplates the man *as a whole*, the more does the conviction force itself upon one that he *believed in himself*. If it be asked how it is possible for self-delusion to go to such a length, we are prone to reply by pointing to instances of credulity and self-deception in our own day which go far to show the possibility of this. When we find intelligent men and women, not a few, devoutly believing that they can at will summon and converse with the spirits of the dead, and receive messages through rocking tables and entranced mediums—some, at least, of those mediums being equally sincere and equally deluded—we have sufficient reason both to wonder at human gullibility and to suspend judgment in the case of the Arabian prophet.

died a natural death. The Hijra, or the Flight to Medina, from which event the Mohammedan era dates, took place in July, 622 A.D. On his way to this city of refuge he met an Arab tribe, the Beni-Sahm, and succeeded in converting them to his views. Their chief, as if divining the necessities of the case, took off his turban, bound it to his lance for a standard, and marched with his whole tribe as an escort to the prophet. Mohammed thus entered Medina, not as a lonely fugitive, but with an air of importance and power. Here he built his first mosque and instituted religious forms of worship. With considerable skill he organised rules of fraternity and mutual help amongst his followers, he assiduously fostered their growing enthusiasm for his now advancing cause. During the first year of the Hijra, he proclaimed war as a divinely-appointed means of spreading the faith. His first efforts in this line were of a questionable character; he longed to avenge himself upon his Meccan foes, but, being too weak to engage them in open warfare, he consoled and enriched himself by plundering their caravans. As the prophet shared the spoil with his followers, other motives than those of faith and devotion animated the eager recruits that flocked to his standard. At length he was enabled to take the field against the Meccan army; victory attended his arms. In this, his first battle, he personally had no share; like Moses of old (Exod. xvii. 9–12) he struggled in prayer to God whilst his followers were engaged in the deadly strife. After this, other contests followed with varying results; but the grand crisis came; the prophet, with an army of 10,000 men, suddenly appeared before the walls of Mecca; the inhabitants, finding resistance useless, accepted him as their sovereign and teacher. Forthwith the Kaabà was purged of its 360 idols, and Islam became the creed of the holy city. In the meantime, the Moslem forces spread themselves over the provinces, demolishing idol-temples, and at the point of the sword propagating the victorious faith. Only a little before this, Mohammed issued

mandates to eight foreign potentates, calling upon them to accept his religion and bow before his divine commission. Amongst the sovereigns thus addressed were the Roman Emperor, the Kings of Persia and Abyssinia, and the Governor of Egypt. That these missives provoked, for the most part, the ridicule and contempt of their royal recipients is only what might have been looked for; but this did not alter the stern fact that the standard of the prophet was destined to float over the fairest portions of the countries ruled by those scoffing potentates.

Singularly rapid had been the advance of Islam since the memorable Hijra: at the close of the first twelve years of his mission, Mohammed was a despised fugitive with a handful of followers; at the end of the next ten years, which proved to be the end of his life, he, as a sovereign and a prophet, rejoiced in the homage of myriads of his fellow-men. In the last year of his life he paid his last visit to Mecca in company with 40,000 pilgrims. Some months later the hand of death was upon him. The closing scenes in the lives of men like Buddha and Mohammed are fraught with interest; in each of these cases the interest is of a touching character. We have seen how the great founder of Buddhism passed away; carnal force had formed no feature in his operations, love to his fellows and self-denial had ever marked him; he died in the midst of patient, loving toil; but he knew of neither God nor hope, so the last words which lingered on his lips were, 'All things are transient!' How died the founder of Islam? But a few days before his end, when he felt the end was approaching, he raised himself from his bed and, supported by a slave, in the dead of night, retired to the burial-place of Medina; standing there, he said the option had been given to him to remain in the world or depart to his Lord; he declared that the latter was his choice. He then offered a prayer for the dead, and returned to his home. During the last day of his life he gave liberty to his slaves, distributed alms to the poor, then looked to heaven and cried, 'God stand with me

in the agony of death!' A little while after he expired in the arms of Ayesha, his favourite wife, with the words, 'To the highest companion in heaven!' The Christian mind can hardly help reverting to another death-scene, occurring, chronologically, midway between the two just spoken of, and, as we watch the meek Sufferer's mien, as we listen to his wondrous utterances, as we behold his bowing head and catch his glorious expiring cry, 'It is finished!' can we but exclaim, 'Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!'

We *must* accord sincerity to Buddha, we *may* accord it to Mohammed; but neither the one nor the other could in the hour of death rejoice in a *finished* work. The Arabian Prophet, indeed, in his last illness, seemed to be haunted with an impression of the incompleteness of his work. When dying he felt that emendations and additions were called for in the revelations of which he had been the medium. It is recorded that, in his last moments, he called for writing materials, and essayed in vain to add a new chapter to his former *inspired* teachings. He predicted, also, coming strifes and divisions; he predicted that his followers would be rent into no fewer than seventy-three differing sects.[1]

An apology is needed to such of our readers as may deem the preceding sketch of Mohammedanism superfluous and irrelevant. We almost doubt ourselves whether we have not been guilty of an unwarrantable digression. Should, however, a portion of our readers feel that it has helped them the better to understand the conditions of that religious struggle which the Moslem invasion forced upon India, we shall not altogether regret the seeming irregularity.

[1] He seems to have had an odd notion of an analogical necessity for this; he argued, with what historical accuracy does not appear, that, as the Jewish Church had been divided into seventy-one sects, and the Christian Church into seventy-two, the professors of Islam must in their divisions add one to the last number. The prophet's foresight, however, fell short of the reality, for it appears there are no fewer than 150 sects in the Mohammedan community. See Hughes's 'Notes on Mohammedanism,' p. 43.

Of the predicted sects of Islam, only four have prominently figured in the history of India; these are the Sunnis, the Shiahs, the Sufis, and the Wahabees. The Sunnis pride themselves on their orthodoxy; they comprise among themselves four sections, each of these being founded by one of the four great doctors of Islam—Shafii, Hanifa, Malik, and Hambal. They have good ground for their claim of superior orthodoxy, for they yield implicit allegiance, not only to the teaching of the Koran, but to the whole body of tradition as set forth and expounded by those four distinguished authorities. Their position in relation to the other sects is pretty much the same as that of the Roman Church with regard to the Protestant communities. Their name, Sunni, is derived from 'Sunnah' (tradition), and denotes their religious subjection to traditional teaching.

The Shiahs bow before the Koran and such of the traditions as trace their origin to the inspired prophet, but they reject all the rest. The chief ground of contention, however, between the Shiahs and the Sunnis relates to the Khaliphs, the successors in office to the prophet. The Sunnis acknowledge Abubakr, Omar, and Othman—the first two being Mohammed's fathers-in-law, the third his son-in-law—as the legitimate vicegerents. The Shiahs,[1] on the other hand, reject these as usurpers, and accept Ali, husband of Fatima, the prophet's daughter, and the fourth in the Sunni order of succession, as the first of the true Imams (Khaliphs). Some of the Shiahs attribute to Ali divine characteristics; they say that Allah (God) was in some mysterious way united with him. He and his two sons, Hassan and Hussain, are said to have been assassinated; the Shiahs commemorate this event by the fast of the Mohurram, a period of wailing and lamentation extending over ten days. In other respects also this body of dissenters differs from the orthodox Sunnis; the most interesting feature of this difference relates to the last of the

[1] The term Shiah, implying party or sect, was evidently given to them by their opponents; they call themselves, *Adliyah*, 'the rig tful society.'

Imams and the consummation of all things. The Shias, beginning with Ali, count twelve successors to the prophet, the last of these was Abu Kasim. The Shiahs maintain that he did not actually die, they believe that he is still alive, but kept in concealment until the great day of his manifestation, as fixed by the Almighty, shall arrive; his appearance will take place in the last age of the world, and the result of his return will be the conversion of all nations to the worship of the true God. The Sunnis agree with the Shiahs in looking for the universal triumph of the faith before the end comes; but in two important particulars their expectations differ from those of the Shiahs; they deny the return of Abu Kasim as the Imam Mahdi, and their idea of the conversion of the world involves the total subjugation of all tribes and creeds to the faith of the prophet of Arabia. The views of the Shiahs are more catholic and charitable—they believe that the final triumph of truth will be brought about by an amalgamation of Mohammedanism and Christianity. The Sunnis, in point of numbers, vastly preponderate over the Shiahs: it is estimated that in India not more than one-tenth of the Moslem population belongs to this latter division.

The Shiah type of Islam has been for many centuries the national faith of Persia. Six hundred years ago the Sufi sect had its origin in that country. It was an outcome of Shiahism, but diverged much more widely from orthodox tenets than did its dissenting parent. Very special interest attaches to the views of the Sufis, inasmuch as we behold in them a reflection of the Vedanta philosophy of India. The history of their contact with this philosophy would seem to be thus: Zoroaster, the great Persian sage, who flourished somewhere about the era of Buddha, undoubtedly borrowed largely from the Vedantist school of thought; the Sufis in turn caught their peculiar tinge of doctrine from the religion which he founded. The reader has only to recall to mind what, in a previous chapter, was said of

the Hindoo Gyan-marga, 'the way of knowledge,' to comprehend the system of the Sufis. Like their Indian precursors, they went upon two fundamental principles—they maintained that God alone existed, and that the final absorption of the human soul (which was really a part of God) into the Supreme Deity was the grand aim and end of life. This ultimate union with Deity was to be reached by successive steps, as the result of persistent devotion and intense meditation. An interesting distinction, however, appears in the process as delineated by the Indian and Persian mystics, respectively. Whilst the Indian devotee aimed at utter mental abstraction, a complete cessation from thought, sense, and desire, the Sufi aspired to a growing acquaintance with God, such as would culminate in ecstatic devotion to the Divine Being—a love which would fascinate the whole soul, and expel all inferior affections and desires.[1]

The Wahabees derive their origin and name from Mohammed Ab dul Wahab, who founded the sect some 150 years ago. He was the son of a petty chieftain of Nejed; he was an orthodox

[1] It is not to be denied that the mysticism of the Sufis often finds expression in a sort of wild delirium, and even in reveries of a gross and carnal nature, yet all that is the corruption and perversion of a true conception. An eminent Mohammedan convert in India, Maulavi Safdar Ali, says of them, 'There are among them many men who truly love God, and earnestly desire to obtain his favour, and who practise on this account exceedingly severe austerities, and engage in labours night and day; they leave the world and wander about in jungles, hungry and thirsty, lamenting their ignorance of God and His will, and continue every moment in disquietude and unrest on this account.' The Rev. T. V. French, one of the most eminent of our Indian missionaries, and one who has, perhaps, consorted more with Indian Mussulmans than any living missionary, says of the Sufis, 'There is a deep feeling of need stirring in the hearts of many a devout Moslem, need of nearness to God, of a higher, diviner life; of fellowship with the best, purest, truest, loveliest Being—with God; a dim, restless, unsatisfied craving after a life the counterpart of that which the Apostle Paul describes as experienced in himself, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."' In illustration of this statement Mr. French cites the following remarkable petition of one of those devout souls, 'Give me, O Lord, first a death in which there is no life, and then afterwards a life in which there is no death!' Such was the prayer of Ab duli Kadar Jilani. Who can but breathe 'Amen!' to such a touching cry? *Vide Papers in the Report of the Allahabad Missionary Conference for* 1872-73, by Maulavi Safdar Ali and the Rev. T. V. French, M.A.

Sunni of the Hambali school. His father was a devout and earnest follower of Islam, and in his early youth the son imbibed the devotional tone and spirit of the sire. When a young man, he accompanied his father on a pilgrimage to Mecca. That Rome of Mohammedanism had become what the Papal capital was when the denunciations of Luther first began to be heard; it was no longer a *holy* city, it was the centre of the foulest superstitions and the grossest sensuality; myriads of pilgrims flocked to the sacred shrines, only to gaze upon senseless mummeries, strange to the Koran, and to be scandalised by, or to revel in, unblushing immorality, repugnant even to the lenient morality of that sacred book.

The righteous soul of Wahab groaned within itself at the terrible and loathsome spectacle. He said little, but for three years, in the city of Damascus, did he ponder over the subject. At length he broke silence, and fiercely and persistently denounced the prevailing corruption of faith and morals. He fearlessly accused the doctors of the law of nullifying the written word by their own traditions, whilst he stigmatised the mass of the people as being, in point of morality, worse than infidels. The usual consequences followed; he paid the penalty of his faithfulness—he was hunted from city to city, accursed by the priests, and hated by the populace. At length he found an asylum and a friend; an Arabian chief, Mohammed Ibn Sa'ud, welcomed the reformer and embraced his views. The marriage of Wahab with the chieftain's daughter cemented the union and developed it into oneness of interest. It is curious to note how a movement which, at its origin, is simply religious and highly commendable, may, by seemingly accidental conjunctures, be diverted from its course, and receive a new and less laudable tendency. Our readers will remember how this was the case with Mohammed himself, how the meeting with and conversion of a wandering tribe, during his flight to Medina, helped to decide the future militant aspect of his mission. It was thus

with Wahab; encouraged and prompted by his father-in-law, he raised the standard of revolt against the Turkish Government. The army of the reformation went forth conquering and to conquer; ere long, thirty Arab tribes acknowledged the reformer's sway. Wahab himself died A.D. 1787, but the movement continued to triumph; at length, in 1803, an army of more than one hundred thousand Wahabees captured Mecca and, in the following year, made themselves masters of Medina also. Their entrance into the holy city was marked by a violent display of zeal and vengeance; thousands of the inhabitants were slain, sepulchral monuments and numerous shrines, at which devout pilgrims supplicated departed saints, were demolished—not even was the tomb of the Prophet spared. For many years they successfully defied the Turkish power, and vigorously upheld and advanced their protestant creed. That creed repudiated all idea of saintly mediation, it denied the power of intercession even to Mohammed himself; it maintained the right of private interpretation of the Koran and rejected the authority of priestly glosses thereupon; it denounced the unauthorised ceremonies which had crept into the ancient ritual; it enjoined the obligation (even more strongly than the Prophet had done) of advancing the faith by the power of the sword; it taught implicit subjection to the spiritual head of their community, and directed all true believers to look anxiously for the coming of the true Imām, who would lead their forces to universal victory and conquest.

But Wahabeeism, so far as it depended upon the sword, was doomed to perish by the sword. In 1811 Mohammed Ali, the Pasha of Egypt, entered the lists against this formidable confederation; after a struggle of two years he recovered Mecca and Medina, and inflicted a heavy blow at the prestige and power of the reformers. Their final and complete overthrow was effected by the succeeding Pasha, Ibrahim, in 1818. At that time their last head, Abdallah, was captured and taken to

Constantinople, where he was executed. Their temporal power was thus abolished; but, as a religious sect, the followers of Wahab still exist in considerable numbers in Arabia and Turkey, and also in India. As we shall see hereafter, the political and militant element in the Wahabee movement is by no means extinct; it may be held in abeyance, but, as we have learned to our cost in India, it may at any time assume the character of a fanatical and furious crescentade.

In dealing with the history of Mohammedanism in India, it is extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, to separate the religious from the political element—to show in what way, and to what extent, Islamism, *as a religion* merely, affected and moulded the convictions of the Hindoos. Ever since Mohammed grasped the sword on his flight from Mecca, physical force and political influence have been prominent agencies in spreading the faith. So markedly has this been the case in India, that one almost searches in vain for any trace of the moral and persuasive element—the element whereby alone the convincing force of a religion can be tested. As you journey through the shifting phases and tortuous windings of Moslem history in Hindustan, you find abundant traces of collision between the faith of the Prophet and that of the Hindus; here you see an outburst of furious fanaticism, now of the Hindus, now of the Moslems—but *oftener of the latter.* You behold victorious legions of the faithful slaughtering the infidels by thousands, destroying idols, demolishing temples, or turning them into mosques, forcibly circumcising Brahmans, and, alas! too often perpetrating outrages on women; anon, you behold a ruler less ruthless and more sagacious, tolerating Hindus and their worship, opening to them offices of emolument and distinction, contracting even matrimonial alliances with them, and so soothing their prejudices and, more or less, reconciling them to the dominant creed; all this you plainly see, but you discern hardly a vestige of what may be termed a purely missionary

effort, an effort to effect the conversion of the Hindus by an appeal to their convictions—an effort, that is, corresponding in character to the labours of Buddha and his bands of preachers, or the operations of Christian missionaries in the present day.

So conspicuous, indeed, is this moral influence by its absence, that one is tempted to ask, where would Islam have been at this day in India had its power of propagation been restricted to this one rational agency? As it is, its success has been altogether dubious and partial; that, after a lapse of ten centuries since its first appearance in the country it should count its followers by millions, is no matter of surprise—the surprise is, that after such a lengthened period of contact and conflict, it should have left the great Hindu fabric not only unshaken, but scarcely affected by the strife. When the last of the Mohammedan rulers resigned the sceptre, Hinduism was, in the main, just what it was when the first Moslem set his foot on the shores of India; but, though *it* emerged from the struggle with scarcely a scar, it left deep indentations in the shield of its foe—Islam in India has become deeply tainted with the corruptions of the hostile creed.

It is impossible to review the history of the successive invasions of India by the followers of the Prophet, and the persistent opposition which they and their creed encountered before their rule was established, without admiring the heroism and self-sacrifice of the Hindus. Patriotic devotion and deeds of valour, unsurpassed even in the annals of Greece and Rome, again and again distinguished them, whilst a noble army of martyrs, who preferred death to apostasy, appears side by side with those who cheerfully shed their blood for their country's freedom. The wonderful ease and rapidity with which Mohammedanism spread itself over Syria, Persia, the north of Africa, and Spain, overturning dynasties and abolishing national faiths, stands out in striking contrast to the slow and painful process by which it gained a footing in India. In truth, as it has been

well remarked, Hinduism presented a mightier barrier to its progress than did the degenerate Christianity of other lands. Hinduism was just issuing out of a deadly conflict with Buddhism, bearing the palms of victory, and nerved with fresh vigour, whilst in those lands where Islam won its easier triumphs, Christianity had, by growing superstitions and prevailing corruptions, become old and ready to vanish away; in the one case the Philistines encountered Samson in his giant strength, in the other they came upon him when bereft of his potent locks.[1]

The Trident and the Crescent first confronted each other on the plains of Scinde. In the year 705 A.D., Walid I., Khaliph of Damascus, sent an army to avenge an alleged outrage upon an Arab vessel. The Rajah marched against the invading foe, but was defeated and slain. Two of his daughters fell into the enemy's hand; they were sent to grace the harem of the Khaliph. The widow of the Rajah and the mother of the girls proved herself a heroine of the noblest type; she placed herself at the head of her brave Rajpoot troops, and made a last stand at the city of Brahmanabad. When all hope of deliverance failed them, the Rani, with the rest of the women and children, burnt themselves alive, whilst the Rajpoots rushed out upon the enemy and perished sword in hand. Kasim, the Moslem general, offered the vanquished Hindus of Scinde the alternative of Islam or tribute. The terms were indignantly rejected, whereupon the Arab soldiers wreaked their vengeance on the recalcitrant idolaters. Kasim forcibly circumcised a number of Brahmans, but they, notwithstanding, bravely spurned the tyrant's creed; hereupon the enraged general put to death every Brahman over seventeen years of age, and reduced to slavery all who were under that age.[2] Such is the story of the first contact of Hinduism with Islam. Thus Moslem bigotry and violence encountered at their first impact with India the sturdy valour of

[1] *Vide* Robson's *Hinduism in its Relations to Christianity*, p. 228.
[2] *Vide* Wheeler's *History of India*; *Mussulman Rule*, pp. 16, 17.

true patriots and the religious devotion of true martyrs. This opening phase of the coming strife casts its explanatory shade over the eventful future.

In subsequent campaigns Walid subdued other portions of the country, until, at length, his forces reached the banks of the Ganges. Here their progress was stayed; they were utterly defeated and driven out of India by Bappa, the Rajah of Mewar. For the best part of a century no further attempts were made at the conquest of Hindustan. After that a series of Moslem invasions followed, all of which failed of their object; defeat after defeat attended the arms of the invaders, and they were compelled to retire before the resolute chivalry of the Hindus.

The advent of the redoubtable Mahmud of Ghuzni, A.D. 1001, changed the aspect of affairs. Bravely as ever did the Rajpoots fight for their freedom and faith; it was in vain. Mahmud, in twelve successive invasions, triumphed over all opposition, and at length established the Moslem dominion in India. His religious zeal was displayed in the demolition of Hindu gods and idol-temples, but, so far as appears, the Moslem faith achieved no other triumph in the conquered land. After the death of Mahmud in 1030, a century and a half followed with a history so uninteresting and valueless that it may well be passed over in silence.

The reigns of Mohammed Ghori and of Kutub-ud-deen were marked by martial and political vigour; idols and temples were overthrown, and idolaters were compelled to pay the Jezzia, the tribute which punished their religious contumacy; no other trace of the advance of Islam appears.

During this period, Bengal and Bihar first felt the grip of the iron hand. Mohammed Bakhtiyar, a Moslem adventurer, formed a kingdom for himself in those fertile and peaceful provinces. The conquest was easily accomplished; the inhabitants of those regions lacked the noble physique and warlike spirit of the Rajpoots—they meekly bent to the storm and accepted the

inevitable. This did not prevent the ruthless victor from perpetrating gratuitous atrocities; in one case he put a whole college of Brahmans to the sword, and on entering Nuddea, the capital of Bengal, slaughtered every soul he met in the palace of the Rajah. The reason which accounts for this easy triumph of Moslem arms will go far to explain the comparative success of the faith in those districts. The Hindus of Bengal were as inferior to their brethren of the north in religious fervour as in physical courage; a considerable proportion of the rural population in southern and eastern Bengal were either not Hindus at all, or loosely hung on to the outskirts of the Hindu community; they stood at the very bottom of the social scale: to self-respect and enthusiasm they were alike strangers; a change of religion to them brought with it no sacrifice of conviction or surrender of privilege—positive advantages rewarded the change: as dishonoured Hindus they were fleeced by the Brahmans and despised by their high-caste brethren; as converts to Islam they could ridicule caste distinctions and glory in holding the faith of their rulers, and doubtless enjoyed other advantages of a more tangible character. Looking at the matter in this light, one ceases to wonder that one half the entire Moslem population of India is to be found in Bengal, and amongst persons of the very class we have described. There can be little doubt that the establishment of the Mohammedan rule in Bengal was followed by wholesale conversions of the ancestors of the twenty-one millions in that province who now swear by the faith of Mohammed.[1]

[1] As to the precise way in which the original converts were gathered into the Moslem fold, history is silent; certain legends point to the fact, which we can well believe, that, over and above official and governmental influence, individual Mohammedans with laudable missionary zeal advanced their faith amongst the ignorant masses; but it is a singular and noteworthy circumstance that Islam utterly failed as a converting agency amongst the middle and higher classes of Hindus. The few families of respectability which now figure amongst the Moslem population of Bengal are, with scarcely an exception, descendants of imperial dignitaries and of others who held office under the Sultans of Gour.

Bakhtiyar established his capital at Gour; thus Mussulman India was divided into two kingdoms, the one comprising Bihar and Bengal, the other the kingdom of Delhi, embracing the Punjab and Hindustan as far as Allahabad.

The dynasty known as that of the Slave Kings of Delhi passed away at the end of the thirteenth century; thus nearly three hundred years had elapsed since Máhmud established the Moslem dominion in India. So utterly meagre are the historical data that it is impossible to speak with any certainty as to the religious aspect of affairs at the end of that period. Southern India had in the meantime been hardly touched by Moslem power or influence. At length Alla-ud-deen overran and conquered a great part of the Dekhan and the Peninsula. He carried off and married the wife of the Rajah of Guzerat, and ultimately betrothed the Hindu daughter of the Rani to his eldest son. These were the first instances of matrimonial alliances between the Mohammedan rulers and Hindu princesses. A converted Hindu was also advanced by the Sultan to the post of Vizier. It would appear that about this period not a few shrewd and ambitious Hindus purchased political advancement by the sacrifice of religious fidelity. One such a dubious convert, named Khusru Khan, played a conspicuous part during the profligate reign of Mubarak, the son of Alla-ud-deen. This facile courtier first secured his royal master's affections, then pandered to his vices, and at last murdered him. The assassin seized the reins of power, and for five months ruled as Sultan, under the style of Nasir-ud-deen. He seems to have contemplated the re-establishment of the Hindu religion; the Koran was dishonoured, and idols were set up in the mosques. He was dethroned and slain by Ghias-ud-deen, the founder of the Tughlak dynasty.

Nothing of religious interest meets us until the reign of Firuz Shah, A.D. 1350–1388. The period during which this sovereign swayed the sceptre was in some respects a palmy

era for Hindustan; Firuz presents the type of an enlightened ruler and a devout Moslem. He sought, and in every way advanced, the material interests of the country and the prosperity and happiness of his subjects. His honest devotion to Islam, however, made him a conscientious and resolute foe to idolatry. He rightly divined that Brahmanical influence formed the chief barrier to the progress of the faith of Islam. Up to his time, the Brahmans had been exempted from the payment of the Jezzia, the infidel poll-tax. Firuz insisted on their paying the hated impost. His righteous zeal was manifested in still more rigid proceedings. Tidings reached the ears of the Sultan that a venerable Brahman, in the heart of the royal capital itself, was converting the followers of the Prophet to his idolatrous creed. Firuz cited the Brahman into his presence. The guilt of the culprit was proved. Firuz then appealed to the Ulama, the Moslem bench of law-doctors, to adjudicate the matter; their answer was clear and prompt—recantation or death was the only sentence which the Koran admitted. It was put to the Brahman whether he would embrace Islam or die a Hindu; his answer was not less firm and resolute, he preferred death to apostasy. He was bound hand and foot and perished in the flames—a spectacle of what the Moslems called pagan obstinacy, but which we prefer to describe as heroic religious constancy.[1] That, notwithstanding his religious intolerance, Firuz Shah was popular with the mass of his subjects, seems indisputable; and, though again we have to bewail a dearth of positive historic data, we can well conceive that, in his reign, Mohammedanism achieved a degree of substantial success in the country to which it had been a stranger before.

Three years before Firuz Shah ascended the throne of Delhi, a Shiah revolt against the paramount power broke out in the Dekhan; this resulted in the severance of the south from imperial control. Hasan Gangu, of whose previous history little is

[1] *Vide* Wheeler's *History of India, Mussulman Rule*, p. 76.

known, founded an independent kingdom with Kulbarga for its capital. The Sultan made a Brahman his Prime Minister, without, as it appears, requiring his adoption of the faith of Islam. From this circumstance the new Dekhan kingdom came to be termed the Bahmani or Brahmani kingdom. Hasan was a Shiah, and would seem to have been tolerant of the Hindus even to the extent of sympathising with their views. On the other hand, his son and successor, Mohammed Shah, was a Sunni, and was as bitter and hostile to the Hindus as his father had been courteous and indulgent. The ferocity of his nature, quite as much as his religious bigotry, appears in a terrible episode in his history. During the progress of a war between himself and the Hindu sovereign of Vijayanagar, Mohammed made a solemn vow on the Koran that he would not sheathe his sword until he had dyed it with the blood of 100,000 idolaters. Fearful to relate, he kept his vow to the letter, and by the indiscriminate murder of men, women, and children, made up the dreadful tale of slaughter. A touching scene followed upon this cruel outrage—a scene which surely ennobles the character of the Hindus, whilst it blasts that of the ruthless tyrant. A Hindu embassy from Vijayanagar waited upon Mohammed, and thus addressed him: 'O Sultan! Krishna Rai (the Hindu Rajah) may have committed sins, but it is not good for you to kill the innocent. The Bestower of kingdoms has given the Dekhan to you and the Kanarese country to Krishna Rai; there may yet be many wars between the two kingdoms; let therefore a treaty be made, that henceforth none shall be slain excepting the soldiers fighting in the field.'[1]

Between the death of Mohammed Shah, in 1374, and the dismemberment of the Bahmani kingdom, in 1516, nought but the barest hints and incidents of religious interest meet us; these cast at best a fitful and flickering light on the mutual relations of the two antagonistic faiths in the Dekhan. One thing

[1] *Vide* Wheeler's *History of India, Mussulman Period*, p. 94.

is abundantly clear, that in this part of India more than elsewhere, Islam was a house divided against itself; the hereditary hate of the Shiah and Sunni factions repeatedly manifested itself in bitter party strifes. During the century and a half which intervened between the death of Hasan Gangu and the disappearance of the kingdom which he founded, only one sultan appears on whom the mind can rest with pleasure. This was Mahmud, who reigned for twenty years, from 1378 to 1397 A.D. In character he seems to have resembled Firuz Shah, of Delhi; he was a good Moslem, and a righteous and beneficent sovereign —in short, just one of those rulers who may be supposed to have exercised all the more religious and moral influence upon his subjects from the fact that his genial and peaceful reign left hardly any materials for the secular historian to record. A serious famine occurred whilst he was on the throne, and he, anticipating the benevolent and enlightened policy of the present Government of India in such emergencies, employed many thousands of bullocks to import grain to sustain his famishing subjects. He then did the very thing which in our day has been carried out, he collected the orphans left by the devastation of the famine, and in all the chief towns in his kingdom established schools and orphanages for their instruction and support. In searching for auxiliary agencies in the propagation of Islam in the Dekhan, such a fact stands out with singular prominence.[1]

[1] A very curious history attaches to an institution of this nature in Bengal. In the Orissa famine of 1866 probably half a million of persons perished; hundreds of orphans were collected; some two hundred of these were received by the Commissioner of Police in Calcutta, the present Sir Stuart Hogg. This gentleman organised an Orphanage for them, and, in order to conciliate the religious prejudices of the natives, left it to a joint-committee of Hindu and Mohammedan gentlemen to decide the question of the religious and moral training of the children. Probably the Commissioner had a shrewd apprehension of the inevitable result. It was a case in which not even Herod and Pilate could agree; all agreed in the necessity of some religious training, but what should be its character? Who was to say what the religion of the parents had been? in many cases this was impossible to decide; but without caste they could not be Hindus—here was the *Hindu* difficulty. 'Then,' said the Moslems, 'let us train them all as Mohammedans.' 'No,' said the Hindus,

Amongst the worthless sovereigns who succeeded Mahmud, we find one, Firuz, a libertine in morals and a liberal in religion. He studied the Old and New Testaments along with the Koran, and he filled his harem with women from various lands and of various creeds. Hindu ladies shared the dubious honours of the seraglio. In his day, the Hindus routed the Moslem forces, levelled to the ground mosques and Moslem shrines, and imitated, we fear, too closely the atrocities which had been perpetrated on themselves. This broke the heart of Firuz; but his successor, Ahmud Shah, amply revenged the injury and fully developed the savageness of his nature. He slaughtered the Hindus of all ages and sexes by twenty thousand at a time, and then paused for a three days' feast before repeating the holocaust. He demolished temples and Brahmanical colleges. How far his atrocities affected the religion of his day does not appear. If the generous rule of Mahmud appealed to the convictions of the *best* of the Hindus, the ruthless might of Firuz might well help on the conformity of the *worst*.

During the reign of his son, Alla-ud-deen, the Hindu Rajah of Vijayanagar held a council of Brahmans and Rajpoots, and asked their solution of the problem which troubled him—how was it that the Moslems almost invariably defeated the Hindus? The Brahmans replied that the true answer was that God willed it, that this anomaly was a necessary concomitant of the age of Kali (the dark age) and had been foretold in the holy Shasters. The soldiers took a more practical view of the difficulty; they assured the Rajah that the superior discipline and equipments of the Moslems sufficiently accounted for the phenomenon which he deplored. The Rajah bowed to the comments of the Brahmans, and acted upon the suggestions of the Rajpoots;

'for some are certainly of our creed.' The upshot was, that each party gave up the matter as hopeless, and the Commissioner, nothing loath, surrendered the children to Christian guardianship, and we look back with thankfulness to the time when it was our happy privilege to admit the greater part of them by baptism into the Church of Christ.

he improved the discipline of his Hindu troops, and enlisted great numbers of Mussulman soldiers in his army. To meet their case, he built them a mosque and placed a copy of the Koran before his throne, to which they might honestly render obeisance.[1] Here, again, we obtain a glimpse of one of the manifold agencies which, in the absence of direct missionary effort, aided the development of Islam in the country.

Ultimately the Bahmani kingdom was broken up into five independent Moslem States. The change abolished the Mohammedan supremacy in the Dekhan. The future religious history of that portion of India consists, for the most part, of struggles between Shiahs and Sunnis, the Hindus now allying themselves to the one party, now to the other. During that era of unprofitable strife, the Shiah Sultan of Bijaypur, Yusuf Adil Shah, alone deserves specific mention. He rose superior to the narrow spirit of the age; he stretched forth a kindly hand to both Sunnis and Hindus: 'Islam,' said he, 'has many sects, and heaven has many mansions.'

Returning to Hindustan proper, we find Baber, the first of the Moghul Emperors, ascend the throne of Delhi, A.D. 1526. Until his distinguished grandson, Akbar, grasped the sceptre in 1556, nothing of religious importance meets us. For half a century did this remarkable man rule the destinies of Hindustan; that his reign was of considerable religious importance to India no one can doubt. In order to comprehend rightly the kind of impression produced upon the country during his sway, it is necessary to enquire into the religious character of Akbar himself. At no period of his life does he appear to have been a devout and earnest Moslem; his sympathies, so far as they went with one party rather than another, inclined towards the Shiahs. To the Hindus he was more than tolerant; there is little doubt that his policy, quite as much as his religious principles, influenced his bearing towards them. He was a soldier and a

[1] *Vide* Wheeler's *History of India, Mussulman Rule*, p. 104.

statesman; he beheld the Mussulman community torn by party spirit—elements of faction were at work which might eventuate in a dismemberment of his empire corresponding to that which had taken place in the Dekhan. He set his eye and heart upon the Rajpoots; if only he could succeed in attaching these valorous champions of India and Hinduism to himself, his throne would be secured by a bulwark of strength, however the waves of Sunni and Shiah fanaticism might surge around it or Hindu conspiracy threaten it. He sought their support, not their conversion. To bring about the desired end he proposed to the three leading Rajpoot princes a marriage between himself and three of their daughters. After considerable delay, and with ill-disguised reluctance, the Rajahs of Jaipur and Jodhpur consented to the proposal. The Rana of Chitore indignantly spurned the suggestion, and accepted the penalty of an exile and an outlaw in preference to a union of his daughter with the great Moghul. A number of inferior Rajpoot chiefs followed the example of the two Rajahs, and rendered homage to the emperor.

Akbar was thus gaining his point. Besides forming family ties with the leading Rajpoots, he admitted them to a share in the military dignities and emoluments which had previously been monopolised by the Moslems. His efforts at uniting the Rajpoot and Moslem elements met with very partial success. Yet those efforts, doubtless, had an influence on both parties—the Mussulmans became more or less Hinduised, and the Hindus grew more tolerant of the dominant creed. Akbar, indeed, met the Hindus more than half way: he maintained Brahman priests to minister to his Hindu wives, and sometimes even joined in their idolatrous worship. All this disgusted and scandalised the orthodox Sunnis; the Shiahs and Sufis, on the other hand, regarded the Emperor's laxity with tolerable complacency. This was to them a day of grace; they went through the country proclaiming the coming of the great Imam Mahdi, who, as they believed, was about to appear to usher in the Mussulman mil-

lennium. Those fervid preachers seem to have addressed themselves chiefly to the Moslem population; they denounced the pride and hypocrisy of the clergy and the general depravity of the laity in burning terms. The Ulama, the Court of Moslem doctors at the capital, called upon Akbar, as the defender of the faith, to silence the fanatics, and, if needs be, persecute them even unto death. The emperor was either too enlightened or too politic to act on their advice. In truth his faith in Islam was waning, whilst his personal ambition was growing; he seems to have entertained the idea of supplanting the system of Mohammed by an eclectic system of his own devising. With great address he transferred to himself the authority which had been centred in the Ulama, and effectually humbled its pride. He then held consultations with Brahmans, Sufis, Parsis, and Christian divines. These latter were Roman Catholic priests, who, at his own request, visited him from the Portuguese settlement of Goa. The emperor received them courteously, lodged them in his palace, and, with apparent eagerness, listened to their instruction. He, to their great delight, kissed the crucifix and reverently placed the Bible on his head. He, moreover, arranged controversies between the Christian Fathers and a number of Moslem divines, whilst with wrapt attention he followed the course of the discussion. The upshot was the conversion of Akbar. To what extent he apprehended and embraced the fundamental doctrines of Christianity does not appear; probably his conversion meant nothing more than a general impression of the superiority of Christianity to Islam. This impression he did not hesitate to avow; he entered the chapel which the priests had, with his permission, set up within the palace precincts, and there he prostrated himself before the image of the Saviour. He directed his favourite minister, Abul Fazl, to prepare a translation of the Gospels; he accorded full authority to the priests to preach Christianity in any part of his empire. Thus far he went, but he would go no farther; when pressed by his

Christian preceptors to confess his faith by baptism, he demurred; he said he must wait for Divine illumination before taking that step. The story goes that, but for the deterrent influence of his aged mother and his wives, he would have entered the Christian Fold; if this story be true, it is akin to many a similar story which, in the present day, could be told of educated natives of India, who, though they believe in Christ, shrink from baptism; but, we suspect, Akbar's convictions were too feeble and his policy too cautious to allow of his taking such a decided step. The notion was still seething in his brain of an eclectic faith, of which he himself would be the honoured prophet, and which all his subjects might embrace.

His friend and confidant, Abul Fazl, is said to have been actually baptised; in all probability he and his royal master thought alike on the subject of religion. The following lines by Abul Fazl show how vaguely comprehensive were his views, and doubtless they furnish us with a tolerably accurate reflection of the creed of Akbar at the time spoken of.

O God, in every temple I see people that seek Thee,
In every language I hear spoken people praise Thee;
Polytheism and Islam feel after Thee;
Each religion says, 'Thou art without equal.'
If it be a mosque, people murmur the holy prayer;
If it be a Christian church, people ring the bell from love to Thee;
Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister, and sometimes the mosque;
It is Thou whom I search for from temple to temple.[1]

In the meantime, popular speculation busied itself with enquiries as to the actual belief of the emperor—now the Moslems, now the Hindus, now the Christians, laid claim to him. His shifting phases of faith and conduct justified these clashing theories. At length all uncertainty was removed by the promulgation of what Akbar called 'the Divine Faith.' It was a sad

[1] Translation by Mr. Blockmann, quoted in Wheeler's *History of India, Mussalman Rule*, p. 164.

and strange issue of his search after truth, if, indeed, he had been honestly searching after that hidden treasure. It proved to be rather a *new* creed than an amalgamation of existing faiths. So far as it bore affinity to the religions of the day, it favoured the notions of the Hindus and Parsis; the worship of the sun and of fire, and homage to the emperor, as the visible representative of the Deity, were the leading features of the new cult. Christianity dropped out of view, and the orthodox Moslem ritual was supplanted by rites and ceremonies of a novel kind.

All the while the principles of Akbar's government were sound, enlightened, and generous. He laboured to raise the moral tone of his subjects, he punished drunkards and libertines, he strove to suppress polygamy among Mussalmans and the Suttee among the Hindus, he prohibited infant marriages, and legalised the remarriage of Hindu widows. As a prophet he failed, but, as a ruler, he signally prospered; he extended his imperial sway over Bengal and a great part of the Dekhan. In the former province he appointed a Rajpoot, Man Singh, his Viceroy; he also threw open to the Hindus some of the highest offices of State. His Finance Minister, Rajah Todar Mull, was a Hindu of distinguished ability.

No doubt the generous patronage which the emperor accorded to the Hindus exercised considerable influence over them; it does not seem, however, that they in any great numbers accepted 'the Divine Faith.' In the Court of Akbar only one Hindu figures as a professor of that creed. To the credit of the emperor be it said, that he never seems to have sought the triumph of his new creed by surrendering his character for toleration. In estimating the precise effect of his reign on the religious condition of India, we are led to describe it as a process of religious disintegration; the laxity of Akbar's religious views, taken in connection with the enlightened principles of his government and the material success which attended it, could

not but produce a reflection of itself on his subjects: his courtiers, his officials, a large proportion of whom were Hindus, would, to a great extent, take their cue from the great ruler. The haughty Rajpoots could not enjoy the favour and liberality of the emperor, and mix daily with persons of other creeds or of no creed, without losing somewhat of their strictness. From similar causes, easy-going Moslems would grow more lax, and rigid Moslems less exclusive. It was a time in which a general decay of religious earnestness was the prominent feature. The Shiah and Sufi sects alone seem to have shown signs of vigour: whatever inroads were made on Hinduism at this period, to these sects, no doubt, the credit belongs. They were specially favoured by Akbar, were dissenters within the pale of Islam, and some of their principles had no remote affinity to Hinduism.

A curious feature in the religious policy of Akbar should not be passed over. At the very time when he repudiated the creed of Mohammed, he encouraged throughout the country the lowest forms of Moslem worship. Saint-worship among the followers of the prophet thus obtained development and expansion; shrines were set up on every hand over the tombs of the faithful, and crowds flocked to pay their devotions at those sacred spots. This species of worship was sufficiently similar to the worship of the Hindus gradually to attract numbers of these latter to join in those religious observances. Doubtless, concessions on the part of the Moslems rewarded the liberality of the Hindus. The lines of demarcation between the two rival creeds thus lost much of their distinctness in that era of prevalent laxity.

But Hinduism could endure the compromise much better than Islam. The latter lost more in character than it gained in numbers; who can doubt that the strong infusion of Hinduism which characterises popular Mohammedanism in India at the present day, dates from that period? Few and slight are the marks which Islam has left on Hinduism, but manifold and

deep are the impressions which it has derived from that pagan system.

'The Divine Faith' was doomed to perish. A strange and portentous event occurred on Easter Sunday, 1597; Akbar was on that day celebrating a festival in honour of the sun; numerous tents were set up in the neighbourhood of Lahore; within the royal pavilion was a throne, upon the throne was placed an image of the sun, composed of gold and precious jewels; this was the object of worship. A storm came on, and a thunderbolt, as if directed by an invisible hand, smote the throne and set fire to the pavilion, the whole camp was burnt to the ground, the flames spread to the city and consumed the royal palace with all the treasures it contained. This event naturally produced a deep impression on the mind of the emperor; his faith in the new religion, if he ever had any, was shaken. He started for Kashmir, taking with him one of the Christian fathers.[1]

Eight years later this great but erratic ruler passed away; as his end drew near, he renounced his eccentricities, avowed his allegiance to Mohammed, and died as an orthodox Moslem.

Jehangir, the son of Akbar, succeeded to the imperial dignities and responsibilities. His reign commenced in 1605, and lasted for twenty-two years. As regards its religious value, it might almost be passed over as a blank. He possessed all his father's vices and none of his virtues—he was grossly sensual, disgracefully intemperate, and fiercely cruel. He upheld the tolerant policy of Akbar in the matter of religion; he not only suffered the priests of Rome to build churches, establish schools, and preach throughout the country, he actually entrusted to their care two of his nephews to be instructed and baptised. Little did the rejoicing fathers imagine the base motive which actuated the emperor. The two princes were baptised in Agra with public pomp and grandeur. In a few days the delightsome bubble burst; the princes asked the priests for Portuguese wives. The

[1] Wheeler's *History of India, Mussalman Rule*, p. 184.

truth is, Jehangir longed to grace his harem with European women, and this was the detestable scheme whereby he hoped to effect his purpose. When the priests refused the strange request, the royal converts returned their crucifixes and breviaries, and washed their hands of Christianity.

The reign of Jehangir is of special interest from the fact that the English element then first meets us in the Court of the Great Moghul. In 1608, Captain Hawkins brought a letter from James I. to the emperor. Seven years later, Sir Thomas Roe arrived as an accredited ambassador from the same English sovereign. For nearly three years Sir Thomas was the guest of Jehangir; he has drawn a strange and weird picture of the barbaric splendour, official corruption, and moral dissoluteness which marked the emperor's court. Little did the ambassador or his imperial host, at whose hands he craved a charter of commerce for Britain, conceive that the day would come when the imperial title and more than the imperial power of Jehangir would be enjoyed by the sovereign of that insignificant isle.

Sir Thomas Roe, during his sojourn at the Court of the Moghul, formed a close friendship with a venerable Moslem, the Viceroy of Bihar. This veteran had served under the two preceding emperors. Roe says of him, 'He praised the good prophet Jesus and His laws, and was full of very delightful and fruitful discourse.' Mr. Terry, the chaplain of the embassy, seems to have been a grave and worthy man; the following is his testimony to the general aspect of the Moslem population: 'There is not a man among the Mussalmans, but those of the baser sort, that mentions the name of our Saviour, whom they call the Lord Christ, without reverence and respect. They say He was a good man and just, lived without sin, and did greater miracles than any before or since. They even call Him the "breath of God," but cannot conceive how He should be the Son of God, and therefore will not believe. Notwithstanding this, the Mussalmans in general think Christians so unclean, that

they will not eat with us, nor yet of anything that is dressed in our vessels.'[1]

Two things strike us as significant in this description. Surely this generally favourable impression of Christianity owed something to the Koran itself, something to the earlier influence of Akbar in favouring that Divine faith; and shall we not say that it owed something—perhaps very much—to the preaching of those priests who enjoyed the patronage of that sovereign, and who, we cannot doubt, though with considerable admixture of error, in an honest and true heart, exalted the Saviour of all mankind.

Mr. Terry's account of the caste prejudices which marked the Moslems entirely bears out our previous inference as to the deteriorating influence of Hinduism on the system of Mohammed. Already the deadly leaven was at work, already Islam had been inoculated with the virus of Hinduism. Every Indian missionary knows that the iron band of caste—a thing utterly alien to pure Islamism—binds the Mohammedans almost as firmly as it does the Hindus.

The thirty years' reign of Shah Jehan, the son and successor of Jehangir, adds nought to the religious history of the country; in its essential features, it was but a continuation of the reign which preceded it. But for the fact that the erection of the inimitable Taj Mahal has given immortality to his name, the world might be glad to forget that a wretch of a nature so base and of deeds so foul ever existed. Shah Jehan sank even to a lower depth of depravity than his father ever reached.[2]

The rule of Aurungzeb witnessed the revival of Moslem bigotry and religious persecution; the Jezzia, the infidel poll-tax, was re-imposed on the Hindus; a war against idols and temples again broke out. The sequel showed that the Hindus

[1] Whéeler's *History of India, Mussalman Rule*, p. 216.

[2] The most revolting episode in his history appears in his relations with the Begum Sahib, his own daughter by his wife, Muntaz Mahal, to whose memory he reared the wondrous marble pile at Agra.

had lost nothing of their ancient devotion and manly courage; they rose in rebellion, and maintained the struggle with a persistence and energy which threatened the stability of the Moslem rule. It is hardly to be wondered at that they, in seasons of triumph, reciprocated the intolerance of their adversaries; they destroyed mosques, cast the Koran into wells, and prohibited the celebration of Moslem worship. In the meantime, the formidable Mahratta power arose in the south, strengthening the hands of the Hindus, and weakening those of Aurungzeb. Before the hand of death was laid upon that able and distinguished ruler, the signs of dissolution in his empire began to appear.[1]

The advent of the Persian conqueror, Nadir Shah, did not prevent the development of political power amongst the Hindus. The sun of Islam set with the decease of Aurungzeb; gradually the Moslem emperors fell into the position of merely nominal rulers, used by the Hindus for their own convenience. Such did they remain, and so were they used by the English for a century after the virtual power had come into their hands. The terrible mutiny of 1857 abolished the senseless farce, and the last representative of Moslem supremacy in India found an unhonoured grave in a penal settlement.

It must be admitted that the foregoing sketch of Mussalman rule in India furnishes but scanty and uncertain data as to the progress of Islam in the country. In forming an opinion on the subject much must necessarily be left to inference. Still there are certain things which may be regarded as settled points. First, it will hardly be disputed that Islam owes the

[1] The account given by Father Catrou of the death of Dara, the eldest son of Shah Jehan, is one of touching interest, and shows that even in that inauspicious era Christian influences were at work. Dara was put to death by his brother Aurungzeb. He had long shown his regard for the religion of Jesus. When his doom was fixed he exclaimed 'Mohammed has destroyed me; Jesus the Son of the Eternal will save me!' Just before the fatal blow was struck he cried, 'Mohammed gives me death; the Son of God gives me life!' He asked in vain for a priest to minister to him in his last moments. Wheeler's *History of India, Mussalman Rule*, p. 213.

measure of success which it achieved to other influences than the force of conviction. That cases of conversion from honest conviction were altogether unknown, we do not affirm. What we maintain is, that the great bulk of Moslem proselytes owed their conversion to other considerations than a conviction of the religious superiority of Islam to Hinduism. No census returns in the olden times indicate the progressive growth of the Moslem community. It is true that the Census of 1872 shows a Mohammedan population of 40 millions, or about one-sixth of the whole population of India. The total figure is doubtless high; but when, as before stated, we take into account the *quality* of the vast majority of so-called Moslems, the item of *quantity* loses much of its importance; when we remember the kind of *stuff* of which one-half the gross total consists in Lower Bengal; when we next allow for the *natural increase* of the Mussalmans of India during a period of so many centuries—we shall perceive that even the numerical results are anything but surprising. Let the Christian community in India go on increasing at the same rate at which it has advanced during the last quarter of a century, and, in one hundred years, it will comprise a larger population than Islam can now boast of. This is a telling fact and well worthy of note.

But, as implied, the *quality* of the Moslems of India is the most conclusive evidence of the utter failure of Islam as a converting agency in India. Of the vast proportion of professed Mohammedans it may be said without doubt that they are *half Hindus*; they observe caste rules, they practise numerous idolatrous ceremonies; are steeped to the lips in Hindu superstitions; in short, tried by the teaching of the Koran, they are not Moslems at all, and, were the prophet of Arabia to pronounce upon them, without doubt he would say, 'I know you not!' If next we look to their social and moral standard, the case is no better. However the phenomenon may be accounted for, we, after mixing with Hindus and Mussalmans

in Bengal for nineteen years back, have no hesitation in saying that these latter are, as a whole, some degrees lower in the social and moral scale than the former.[1] Doubtless in the North-West Provinces and in the Punjab, thousands of Moslems of a higher type are to be found—men of respectability, with a loftier moral tone and conscientiously attached to the faith of their fathers; amongst these, too, may be found honest and devout souls, not a few, who have aspirations higher than the Koran itself would foster; but, we believe, a considerable proportion of these are actually the descendants of the original Afghan, Persian, and Moghul conquerors of India; they do not therefore appear before us as typical of the converting effects of Islam in the country.

We have already noticed the recurrence of periods of Mohammedan revival. Those attempts at moral and religious reform have generally been the work of the Shiah and Sufi sects. For fifty years back movements of this nature have been going on in India; a distinction, however, appears in those movements as they occur under a Mohammedan or an 'Infidel' government. In the former case, the revival may be simply and solely religious; in the latter case, a dangerous political element is generally mixed up with it. In this case the militant aspect of Islam comes to the front; to whatever degree religious enthusiasm fires the bosom of the Moslem under an alien government, to the same degree do his religious convictions impel him to seek its subversion.

This unpleasant feature is illustrated in the following story. In 1786 Syud Ahmad was born in the North-West Provinces of India. Up to his thirtieth year he lived on the spoils which he

[1] The Rev. T. P. Hughes, C.M.S. missionary at Peshawur, states: 'One most striking feature in Islamism is the separation which can be made of religion from morality. As we have lived for days in Mohammedan villages, we have frequently been struck with the fact that the most grossly immoral life is not considered incompatible with the most religious profession.' See article on 'Mohammed and Mohammedanism' in the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* for November 1874.

collected as one of a band of robbers. At that age, however, he abandoned his lawless habits and retired to study divinity in the mosques of Delhi. After a course of three years' study the reformed robber sallied forth as a messenger of God to arouse his slumbering co-religionists. He journeyed down to Calcutta preaching in every direction; he fiercely assailed the deadness, indifference, and immorality of the Moslems, and, in agonising earnestness, called upon them to repent. In Calcutta anxious thousands flocked around him craving his help and benediction. In 1822 he performed the pilgrimage to Mecca; he returned in the following year and landed at Bombay; vast multitudes assembled to hear his withering denunciations and fervid appeals. He went thence to the district of Bareili and attached to himself multitudes of turbulent but sincere followers. In 1826 he proceeded to the north-west frontier, and there proclaimed a Jihad (holy war) against the Sikh government of Runjeet Singh. For five years the war raged with varying success, until at length Syud was slain in action.

Such was the commencement of that great Wahabee movement which has already involved the British Government in costly and bloody frontier wars, and is now, though cowed and crushed, a real source of peril and anxiety. The hostility which first showed itself against the Sikhs was transferred to the English rule when that became paramount in the Punjab.

There is something strangely mysterious about those moral metamorphoses in which the current of a man's life and character receives an abrupt and sudden deflection, so that to all intents and purposes he becomes another man. He only who, at a glance, takes in the intricate workings of the human mind, and foresees both the causes and consequences of those workings, can unravel this singular problem. An analogous case, and one arising out of the preceding, meets us in Bengal. Amongst the crowds who listened to the preaching of Syud Ahmad in

Calcutta, was a man named Titu Miyan. This man at that time resembled in character Syud before his change; Titu was of a violent and turbulent disposition; he flourished in Calcutta among men of his dubious type as a wrestler, a bully, and a boxer. His meeting with the Wahabee prophet was the turning point in his history; he also bent his steps to the holy city of Mecca; there he and Syud next met; he returned to do the same work in Lower Bengal as his friend and preceptor was carrying on in the North-West. For several years he itinerated as a preacher in the districts to the north and east of Calcutta. Multitudes enrolled themselves as his disciples. At length the temporary successes of Syud in the Punjab emboldened Titu also to raise the standard of revolt. In October 1831 at the head of several thousands of armed men he proclaimed the overthrow of the 'infidel' rule and the re-establishment of the Mohammedan power. For some weeks three whole districts were at the mercy of these fanatics; a detachment of the Calcutta Militia was sent against them, but was defeated and cut to pieces. At length a body of regular troops confronted them; a smart engagement followed, during which Titu Miyan and many of his followers perished.[1] Although Syud and Titu have passed away, their spirit still breathes in myriads of restless Wahabees in the North-West and in hosts of Firazis in Bengal; their mantle of office still rests on the shoulders of those who are honoured as the legitimate successors of those fiery reformers.

From all this it will appear how momentous may be the issues depending upon our treatment of the Moslems of India. This is a question calling for the serious consideration both of statesmen and of missionaries. The difficulties are great for both. Apart from the orthodox bitterness against unbelievers fostered by the Koran, the Mussalmans of India have special grounds of grievance against their Christian rulers. They

[1] *Our Indian Mussalmans*, by W. W. Hunter, LL.D., pp. 45–47.

behold 'Ichabod' inscribed in glaring characters wherever they look. Their *Raj* has gone, the ten thousand immunities, dignities, emoluments which they enjoyed under Moslem rule, have vanished. They behold themselves shouldered aside by the Hindus who fit themselves for Government service by the pursuit of an education which the Mohammedans despise.[1] Special legislation and exceptional measures of relief may do something to soothe their irritation and soften their rancour, but the fire of discontent will smoulder still; no amount of generous treatment or liberal enactments on the part of the Government will make the Mohammedans of India a loyal and satisfied people; at the end of all its efforts at conciliation the Government will see cause to exclaim, 'We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.' To whatever extent the Moslems are devout and earnest in their attachment to Islam, to the same extent must they be disaffected to a Christian government; such disaffection is the essential outcome of their creed.[2] Doubtless this is an un-

[1] Of the twenty-one millions of Moslems in Bengal, only 28,000 attend Government schools. In Madras a comparative statement as to the proportion of Hindu and Mussalman undergraduates of the University shows out of every 100,000 of the male population, only sixteen Mohammedans to 890 Hindus!

[2] The Wahabee conspiracies resulting in the wars of the North-West Frontier have led to a controversy amongst learned Mussalmans as to the actual position of India in reference to Islam, and the duty of waging war or otherwise against its present rulers. The point to be decided is, whether India, as it is now governed, is to be regarded as *Dar ul Harb*, 'the land of the enemy,' or as *Dar ul Islam*, 'the land of Islam.' The Moslem authorities in Calcutta, by a train of reasoning more specious than solid, have arrived at the very satisfactory conclusion that India *Dar ul Islam*. The inevitable inference is, that Jihad, or holy war, is unlawful. Those learned gentlemen, under the shadow of the Supreme Government, with the memory of the crushing defeats of the successive Jihads of late years, and being withal not particularly warlike themselves, had substantial grounds to aid them in reaching this conclusion. But one is tempted to ask whether, after all, they have brought themselves to believe that India, as it is, is the land of Islam. It is not at all necessary to ask whether the forty millions of Moslems accept this doctrine. Indeed the conclusion is so palpably erroneous that an entirely opposite decision has been given by the great Moslem doctors of Delhi; they affirm, without hesitation, that India is *Dar ul Harb*, the land of the enemy. Now, under different circumstances, there can be no doubt, they would have ruled that, in consequence

pleasant reflection for the rulers of India; they must accept the position and make the best of it. When the King of kings transferred the sceptre of India from Moslem to Christian hands, He conveyed along with it this inevitable consequence of the transfer. England in accepting India accepted Moslem disloyalty as a necessary heirloom. It is a suggestive thought, and becomes overwhelmingly solemn when we reflect that the Queen of England rules over more than double the number of Mohammedans that are governed by the Sultan of Turkey.

In the light of all this, is it too bold to say that the missionary holds the key of the position? The political difficulty can only be met by the conversion of the Mussalmans. And here, surely, whatever may have been the mistakes of the Government, the Church of Christ has especial reason to bow her head with shame, and cry '*Peccavi!*' If the Moslems of India complain of political wrongs, with how much more truth and force might they cry out against us for our neglect of their spiritual interests! They have beheld for the best part of a century very laudable efforts going on around them for the evangelisation of the Hindus, but with too much justice might they exclaim, 'No man careth for *our* souls!' God grant that this wrong may be soon righted, and that the Church may hasten to fulfil her high commission to the millions of our neglected Moslem fellow-subjects!

Several reasons may account for, though they cannot excuse, the comparative neglect of the Mohammedans in our missionary operations in India. With a missionary army so limited as that which fights the battle of the Cross in India, it was not sur-

of this, the duty of Jihad is binding on all good Moslems. But the times are unpropitious; so their ruling is, that the Jihad is only called for in *Dar ul Harb*, when Moslem liberties are infringed, and when there would be a *reasonable chance of success in the holy war*. The Shiahs seem to maintain both that India is the land of the enemy and that the Jihad is lawful in such a land; but their *salvo* is in their principle that a Jihad can only be rightly undertaken when the Imam Mahdi appears to head it. As he is still wanting, the Jihad in India is unjustifi-

prising that its efforts were mainly directed against the citadel of Hinduism. Two hundred millions of Hindus were more than enough to engross the energies of so feeble an attacking force. Then, again, the Hindus were less haughty and stubborn, more courteous and reasonable than the Moslems; the creed of the former exposed a broader surface for the attack than that of the latter; the Mohammedans had sufficient points of contact with Christianity to make them all the more impervious to the assault, and to make the assault itself a most intricate and difficult proceeding. Hence the neglect and oversight; but we are verily guilty in this matter.

This is not the place to discuss the kind of measures called for in extending missionary efforts among the Mussalmans. We will, however, adventure a thought which a review of the past forces upon us. It is abundantly clear that, sunken and degraded as the majority of the Indian Moslems may be, secular and seditious as may be their leading characteristics, they are singularly impressionable in their higher nature, and succumb to earnest appeals to the conscience. Several instances of this have come before us in the present chapter; their consciences being unenlightened, and the appeals based on erroneous principles, the upshot has generally been unsatisfactory; but, surely, their susceptibility to impression under such appeals, may well indicate the right mode of approach by Christian missionaries. We suspect, if the Gospel is to win its way amongst the Mussalmans of India, it will not be so much by religious controversy, certainly not by direct attacks upon Islam and its founder, but by a body of fervid, loving, self-denying preachers, appealing with burning eloquence to the moral consciousness of their hearers, proclaiming the terrors of God's law, which they do not deny, and the solemnity of the coming judgment, which they believe in; then let the sweet, soft notes of redeeming love be poured, like the balm of Gilead, on the quivering sore, and life and healing may be looked for. But who are the men to do this? We do not hesitate to reply that, for such a work, we look not to Europeans,

but to *the converted sons of India.* Imagine an Abdul-Wahab, a Synd Ahmad, and a Titu Miyan, fired with the love of Jesus and of souls, and we have the type of missionary fitted to cope with the Moslem population of India. One such a man might, under God, cause the heart-strings of anxious thousands to vibrate, whilst the cry went forth from their lips, 'What must I do to be saved?' European missionaries may do much in seeking out and training such native apostles. We rejoice that the Church Missionary College at Lahore is doing the very work which we desiderate. If but one in fifty of the students trained in that institution should turn out a preacher of the type indicated, the result will be a glorious success. We conclude this chapter by an extract from a paper by the Rev. T. V. French, the originator of the College. We give this passage as furnishing another touching confirmation of what has been said of the impressibility of the ordinary Mohammedans. We would preface it by remarking that, if even the *ordinary* Moslems are thus open to spiritual impression when rightly approached, how much more likely is this to be the case with those of the *devouter sort*, who all their lives long are dimly feeling after light and peace. Mr. French proceeds:

'One of my students, who is an Afghan, tells me how well he remembers a preacher (Mohammedan, he believes) coming to the village in which he lived near Jellalabad, and preaching repentance in thrilling tones, rousing the whole village people, who assembled in crowds, weeping and groaning, confessing their sins and pledging themselves to amendment of life, purer and more constant worship, stricter obedience, &c. The effect of this was long continued, he told me, and in case of any becoming remiss and falling back they would expostulate one with the other, and recall each other to act on past impressions.' Mr. French concludes this statement with the remark, 'Such an instance of Mohammedan revival, which my informant very simply described, though never accustomed to hear of Christian revivals, struck me as worth remembering, and as suggestive of another method of preaching than that we often adopt.' [1]

[1] Paper in the *Report of the Allahabad Conference of* 1873, p. 61.

CHAPTER VII.

LATER HINDUISM.

'It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite.' (Isaiah xxix. 8.)

The explorers of the Nile, in tracing that mighty river to its source, came upon several of its tributary branches; occasionally they turned aside to trace the course of one or other of those branches; but these were mere diversions; ultimately, they returned to the grand central stream, and journeyed along it until the important object of their search was realised. We, too, are explorers; the religious history of India is the river whose course we are following; between ourselves and our brother explorers there is a point of difference and a point of agreement; the feature of distinction is, that they traced their river *upwards to its source*: we *began at the source* of our river, and pursue it through its downward course. But, as with them, we have in our journey encountered other streams, and we have turned aside to mark their windings, and especially to note their relation to and influence upon the great central stream. We noticed the Buddhist branch issue out of the side of the parent stream. For centuries it flowed along with vigour; its broad waters for a while cast into the shade, and even threatened to absorb, the venerable Hindu river out of which it had issued. But, as time advanced, we perceived the Buddhist branch dry up, and at length all that was left of that once proud stream

found its way back to the ancient river; it had never been more than a flooding of the depressed plains, the old river had all along been the true channel of Indian thought and conviction; it was the *true Nile*, and, after the extinction of its shallow rival, its waters rolled along with augmented force and majesty. Contemporary with the drying up of the Buddhist branch, was the advent of the Moslem stream; in its origin and many of its aspects it was altogether diverse from the ancient river; in our last chapter we have journeyed along its banks; now we have seen it rushing on as a surging cataract, as if it would engulph and swallow up the ancient stream entirely; anon we have watched it in a more placid mood meandering in the vicinity of the grand old river, as if courting an amicable junction with it; at such times, no doubt, by a sort of subsoil percolation, the waters of the contiguous streams have somewhat impregnated each other, but assuredly no junction has ever taken place, and so far as impregnation has occurred, the Moslem waters have been far more deeply tainted than those of its neighbour; to all intents and purposes, the old river flows along as in days of yore; it is still the *true Nile*, and, accordingly, in the present chapter we resume its exploration.

We do not mean to imply that the old river has undergone no change and experienced no modification as to its characteristics. The noble Ganges, from the spot in the Himalaya whence it issues to the delta in Bengal whence it falls into the ocean, is the same grand stream; but how manifold are its vicissitudes and how varied its aspects along its devious and extensive course! An analysis of its waters at different points of its journey would show that they are more or less affected by the soil of the districts through which they pass. Just so has it been with the river of Hindu thought and feeling; it has been throughout one unbroken stream; but its waters, so to speak, have acquired new chemical properties in their course.

It could not be otherwise. Among a thoughtful and specu-

lative people like the Hindus—a people remarkable for religious solicitude—Hinduism could never assume a stereotyped form. It took its rise as a system of expiring monotheism, passing into the phase of physiolatry; by-and-by, nature-worship descended to the grosser forms of idolatry until everything in heaven and earth became an object either of devout homage or superstitious dread; the supernatural was everywhere; *Adrishta*, an unseen and irreversible necessity, presided over all the events of life and regulated human conduct. All this was very dark and dubious, and, to enquiring minds and anxious souls, was to the last degree unsatisfying. What was to be done? No voice from heaven answered the restless yearnings of the spirit; the holy Vedas were still regarded as Divine oracles truly; but the Brahmans, the keepers and expounders of those sacred treasures, had largely added to their simple doctrines and infinitely expanded their prescribed ritual; above all, those haughty possessors of the key of knowledge had developed the mighty engine of caste as a lever for the depression of their fellows and the unbounded aggrandisement of themselves. The masses succumbed in silence, accepted their degradation, and bowed before their priestly rulers; religious deterioration, decaying morality, and rampant superstition marked the times. But there were thoughtful souls ill at ease, asking for light, and liberty, and truth; amongst these also were Brahmans, not a few, who partook of those loftier aspirations. These men set themselves to evolve an answer to the anxious problems which perplexed them. External light seemed to have failed them, so they looked within, and from their inner consciousness and the inductions of reason, sought a solution of those dark queries.

We have seen in an earlier chapter the results at which they arrived; elaborate as were their reasonings, and varied as were their speculations, they really furnished

> Nought the troubled heart to calm,
> Nor ray of hope the soul to warm.

A hazy doubtfulness still hung over everything—over the nature and being of God, over the origin of the universe, over the soul and its destinies. The gloom was intensified by the mist of Pantheism which underlay or permeated every other conception.

To anxious souls like Buddha, the garish light of philosophy did but make the darkness all the more visible; that remarkable man turned in disappointment and disgust alike from popular and philosophic Hinduism; but to whom could he go? he could but look within himself as others had done, and, alas! he succeeded no better, but rather *worse*, than they. They proclaimed an *unknown* God: Buddha said, 'There is no God:' they encouraged modes of worship, and so were in accord with human instincts: Buddha necessarily ignored all acts of worship, and so clashed with those instincts. It was in vain that the great reformer propounded an exalted system of ethics, in vain that he taught the universal brotherhood of man, and love to every creature; as well might we expect the planets still to gravitate and revolve when the sun was withdrawn, as to expect morality and philanthropy to survive the negation of God.

One consequence of the long and fierce strife between Hinduism and Buddhism was, to bring into greater prominence the worship of Vishnu, the second person in the Hindu Triad. The incarnations of this deity as Rama and Krishna popularised those yearnings of the human soul which Buddhism ignored; they set off, as a foil against that atheistic system, the principle that there not only was a God, but that he was a being with human sympathies, passions, and affections. This development of popular theology, far more than the arguments of Hindu sages or the arms of Hindu warriors, helped forward the extirpation of the rival system.[1]

[1] The Saivites far more fiercely assailed Buddhism than did the Vaishnavas. The truth is, Buddha's system in its ascetic aspect bore a close resemblance to the discipline of the worshippers of Siva; this very similarity necessitated in the Saivites a firmer and more vigorous protest against the hated heresy than the

When, after the defeat of this formidable antagonist, Hinduism was compelled to enter the lists with Islam, it found the same sword as had given it the victory over Buddhism its most reliable weapon. It was true Islam acknowledged a God, but he was a God afar off, a God with manifold perfections, but with no tender bond of affinity to man, a God dwelling in the absolute solitude of a sterile unity; to the Hindu mind, Rama and Krishna were better than he.

Accordingly, the Vaishnava revival, which had played such an important part in the struggle against Buddhism, maintained its vitality through all the centuries of Moslem rule which followed. Sect after sect arose, all professing the most ardent devotion to Vishnu in one or other of his manifestations, though differing in many of their subsidiary doctrines and practices. We can only notice a few of the more important of those associations.

The first that claims attention is that of the Ramanujas. The founder of this sect, Ramanuja, appears to have lived in South India, in the first half of the twelfth century. Quite a series of later Vaishnava societies owe their origin to the teaching of this reformer. Ramanuja may with perfect propriety be termed a *reformer*, as well as a revivalist; for he not only encouraged devotion to Vishnu, but propounded clearer and sounder views of the Deity than the Vaishnavas had hitherto held. He vigorously attacked the Pantheism of the Vedanta philosophy; he maintained that Vishnu was before all things, and was the Cause and Creator of all things; and, whereas the Vedantists

Vaishnavas felt called upon to make. The former smote the common enemy 'hip and thigh;' they launched against it their bitterest denunciations, and, when the times favoured them, fought against it with the *literal sword* as well. On the other hand, the Vaishnavas did their work in a more calm and politic style; they assayed, as we have before noticed, to conciliate and comprehend the Buddhists by representing the great Reformer to have been none other than an incarnation of Vishnu himself. Moreover they adroitly, by their popular system of doctrine, sapped the foundations and dried up the sources of the heretical system; they stole away the hearts of its upholders, so that ultimately Buddhism in India *expired for want of Buddhists.*

denied to the Deity the attributes of form and quality, Ramanuja declared that he possessed both, that he was endued with perfect attributes, and had a *dual form*; that he was, on the one hand, the *Paramatma*, the Supreme Spirit, and so the *Cause* of the universe; and, on the other, the Universe itself as the *effect* of that Cause. Whereas the Vedantists taught an actual identity between the Supreme Spirit and the spirit of man, Ramanuja contended for a distinction between the two. The Vedanta pointed to ultimate absorption into the Deity, and the loss of individuality as the hope of the soul; Ramanuja taught *unity without absorption*; he assured the devout worshipper of Vishnu that he should hereafter ascend to Vaikuntha, Vishnu's heaven, and should there partake of the nature, and eternally share the bliss, of that gracious deity.[1] The reader will not fail to observe the inability of Ramanuja entirely to extricate himself from pantheism, even whilst protesting against it; his description of the relation of the Deity to the universe undoubtedly involves the very error he wished to repudiate; yet he was *feeling after* a better conception and a more excellent way.

For some two hundred and fifty years, the Ramanuja sec seems to have maintained its unity. At length, about the end of the fourteenth century, a schism occurred. The new body was called the Ramanandis, or Ramavats. Their founder, Ramananda, resided in the city of Benares. He enforced the worship of Vishnu under the form of his incarnation as Rama. He relaxed the stringency of the rules affecting regimen and ablution; he strove to abolish the distinctions of caste, and in the place of the Sanscrit tongue substituted the vernaculars of the country as the medium of instruction and the language of devotion.

Ramananda had twelve disciples; of these the most celebrated

[1] *Vide* Professor H. H. Wilson's *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus*, vol. i. p. 45.

Kabir. He founded a society called the Kabir Panthis. Kabir was a bolder innovator than either of his predecessors; indeed, if we call them reformers, we must speak of him as a *revolutionist.* His teaching as regards the nature and attributes of the Deity in the main agreed with the doctrines of Ramanuja, and as his followers have ever shown more veneration for Vishnu than for the other members of the Hindu Triad, they have always been regarded as a section of the Vaishnava fraternity; but in point of fact Kabir discouraged the worship of all the Hindu gods, and also the observance of Hindu rites and ceremonies of every description, whether orthodox or schismatical. Yet, though his positive teaching was of this description, he vouchsafed his disciples considerable latitude in reducing their principles to practice. He seems to have sanctioned outward conformity to prevailing usages for peace's sake; his followers might bow down themselves in the house of Rimmon, might wear the semblance of respect for caste, and might in other matters do as the Hindus do, if persecution would have been the penalty of recusancy. His prudent maxim was, 'Associate and mix with all, and take the names of all; say to everyone, Yes, sir; yes, sir. Abide in your own abode.'[1] Kabir evidently felt no ambition for a martyr's crown, nor did he encourage this ambition in his disciples. In truth, men must have strong *positive* convictions in order to nerve them for self-sacrifice; who would be a martyr for a creed of *negations?* Now this seems to have been the character of Kabir's creed; he knew perfectly well what he did *not* believe, but he hardly was sure of what he *did* believe; he could ridicule heartily the follies and puerilities which his untrammelled mind taught him to loathe, but when the query presented itself, 'On what assured basis should my soul repose itself?' all was mist and uncertainty. The literature of the Kabir Panthis is of the most voluminous

[1] Wilson's *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus*, vol. i. p. 75.

description, but, except on the *negative* side, its tone is that of hazy doubtfulness; indeed, so dark and obscure are many of the enunciations, that it is impossible to assign to them any definite meaning.

A most interesting and noteworthy feature in this literature is the frequent reference which it contains to Mussalman principles and practices; it is thus evident that, say, in the early part of the fifteenth century, Islam in India had begun to make itself felt; thoughtful men like Kabir had been led to study its features and claims as a rival to the national creed. Indeed, so profuse were the allusions of Kabir to the Moslem system, that the Mohammedans came to regard him as one of the faithful; and tradition records a scene at his death which brings to mind the contention over the body of Moses; a fierce dispute took place between the Hindus and Moslems as to the disposal of the corpse; the former wished to burn it, the latter to bury it. In the midst of the altercation, Kabir himself appeared, and requested the disputants to look under the cloth supposed to cover the body; as they looked he vanished, and nought but a heap of flowers greeted their astonished vision!

We cannot close our notice of Kabir without an extract from the Bijak, a work composed by one of Kabir's immediate disciples; the passage no doubt faithfully reflects the *negative* teaching of the great master. The reader will see how little ground either the Hindus or the Moslems had to claim the vigorous censor who impartially denounced the errors of both; nor will he fail to be struck with the vein of truth and spiritual enlightenment which runs through the passage:—'Of what benefit is cleansing your mouth, counting your beads, performing ablution, and bowing yourselves in temples, when, whilst you mutter your prayers, or journey to Mecca or Medina, deceitfulness is in your heart? The Hindu fasts every eleventh day, the Mussalman during the Ramazan. Who formed the remaining months and days, that you should venerate but one?

If the Creator dwell in tabernacles, whose residence is the universe? Who has beheld Rama seated amongst the images, or found him at the shrine to which the pilgrim has directed his steps? The city of Hara is to the east, that of Ali to the west; but explore your own heart, for there are both Rama and Karim.'[1]

The origin of the Sikh religion not only chronologically follows the society founded by Kabir, but there seems strong reason to infer an essential relationship between the two systems. It is highly probable that Baba Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith, had studied the teaching of Kabir and imbibed his sentiments. Nanak commenced his mission in the Punjab about the close of the fifteenth century. He was a trader of a humble standing, but he seems to have been of a devout and enquiring mind; his own convictions, aided, as we may suppose, by the study of the literature of the Kabir Panthis, led him to desiderate an eclectic form of faith and worship—a system which, whilst it maintained friendly relations with Hinduism, would open its arms to persons of every class, not excluding even the Moslems. It does not appear that Nanak's ambition as a religious teacher led him to aspire to do more than found a faith which should weld into a common brotherhood the Punjabees, the men of his own province. Those who embraced his tenets and joined the fraternity, were named Sikhs, or disciples, by which name they are still distinguished. Nanak's theology enforced belief in one God, the Creator of all things, a Being perfect and eternal, though, for the most part, incomprehensible. He declared that the knowledge of God was the only true wisdom, and that this knowledge could only be attained through the grace of God, its divine Object. Good deeds, he said, were of themselves ineffectual to salvation, but that, joined to divine knowledge, they ministered to the attainment of that

[1] Professor H. H. Wilson's *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus*, vol. i. p. 81.

priceless boon. He encouraged the idea of transmigration, but taught his followers to look to a final abode in conscious bliss with God himself.

Up to the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Sikhs were simply a *religious* sect; at that period, however, they began to assert their political importance. In all probability, the harassing exactions which the bigotry of Aurungzeb enforced upon all who were included within the pale of Hinduism, contributed to their dissatisfaction; their growing numbers inspired them with confidence; a desire for freedom and power rapidly developed itself; the times were propitious; the convulsions which ensued upon the death of Aurungzeb, and the invasion of Nadir Shah, furnished the desired occasion for the struggle for liberty. Still more fortunate were they in finding in Guru Govind a leader equal to the occasion. This remarkable man transformed a body of peaceful religionists into an army of redoubtable warriors. No one who has beheld the noble physique, the manly grace, and undoubted fortitude of the Sikhs, can much wonder at this transformation; you feel as you gaze upon them that they were made to be soldiers, and, without doubt, their religion aided their military development. Guru Govind, from 1606 to 1645, the date of his death, ruled over the Sikhs as a militant pontiff; again and again he led his brave followers to victorious conflict with imperial troops. Nanak had given to them the name of *Sikh*, 'disciple;' Govind added to that mild definition the more vigorous term of *Singh*, 'lion.' One hundred and fifty years after the death of Govind, the Sikh confederacy was converted into a kingdom by the famous Runjeet Singh—a kingdom which is now included in our Indian empire, and whose vanquished sons bravely upheld our cause when, in the terrible mutiny of 1857, that empire seemed to be slipping from our grasp.

Another offshoot of the Vaishnava stock is the sect of Dadu Their founder Dadu seems to have flourished about

year 1600, at the close of the reign of Akbar or the commencement of that of Jehangir. His theology, in its leading features, corresponded to that of Kabir; the main distinction appears to have been in his enforcing the worship of Rama; homage was to be paid to no other deity; neither temples nor images were to be used in the worship of Rama; and the sole act of devotion prescribed was the frequent repetition of his name. The Dadu Panthis are at this day numerous in Marwar and Ajmir. They possess a number of sacred books, for which they manifest an almost idolatrous regard. The following extracts from a chapter on Faith give some idea of their religious sentiments; doubtless the reader will be struck with the beauty and truth of those utterances; one is inclined wonderingly to ask, could such true light and such pure devotion have their origin in nature?

I believe that God made man, and that He maketh everything. He is my friend.

Let faith in God characterise all your thoughts, words, and actions. He who serveth God places confidence in nothing else.

If the remembrance of God be in your hearts, ye will be able to accomplish things which are impracticable. But those who seek the paths of God are few.

O forget not, my brother, that God's power is always with you. There is a formidable pass within you, and crowds of evil passions flock to it; therefore comprehend God.

O God, thou art as it were exceeding riches; Thy regulations are without compare.

Take such food and raiment as it may please God to provide you with: you require nought besides. Those men who are contented eat of the morsel which is from God.

For the world I care not, but God's love is unfathomable.

Have no desires, but accept what circumstances may bring before you; because whatever God pleaseth to direct can never be wrong.

All things are exceeding sweet to those who love God; they

would never style them bitter though filled with poison; on the contrary, they would accept them as if they were ambrosia.

Adversity is good if on account of God; but it is useless to pain the body. Without God the comforts of wealth are unprofitable.

He that believeth not in the one God hath an unsettled mind; he will be in sorrow though in the possession of riches; but God is without price.

I am satisfied of this, your happiness will be in proportion to your devotion. The heart of Dadu worshippeth God night and day.

It does not appear that any of the preceding Vaishnava societies established a footing in Bengal; but although they, as associations, might be unrepresented in that vast province, it is hardly conceivable that the great principles of which they were the upholders and exponents should find no echo in that portion of India. As a matter of fact, that echo was heard—heard very distinctly and forcibly in Bengal; and although history fails to indicate a *lineal* affinity between the Bengali Vaishnavas and the worshippers of Vishnu elsewhere, the *doctrinal* affinity is too clear to be doubted. The Vaishnava movement in Bengal dates back to the beginning of the sixteenth century; it was therefore anterior to the origin of the Dadu Panthis. The main characteristics of the theology of the Bengali Vaishnavas, so far as relates to the nature and attributes of God and the soul of man, are in harmony with the views of their brethren in other districts. Their chief peculiarities are twofold; they worship Krishna as Vishnu himself and as comprehending within himself all the virtues and powers of the whole of the Hindu Triad. They also carry much further than do the other Vaishnava sects the efficacy of Bhakti, 'faith or devotion.' Others, as we have seen, preach faith as *better* than works; these proclaim the principle of faith *without* works. Others accord to works in their relation to faith a certain subsidiary efficacy; these say faith stands in no need of the suffrages of works—it alone assures to its possessor the

salvation he desires. It must be borne in mind, however, that the term *Bhakti* as used by the Vaishnavas of Bengal embodies two ideas—implicit faith and incessant devotion. This devotion is manifested in the continual repetition of the name of Krishna; but the mere utterance of the sound does not avail, it must ever be uttered with the firm faith that such recital is sufficient for salvation; these conditions being observed, salvation ensues as a matter of course.

Chaitanya, the founder of this society, began his labours in the early part of the sixteenth century. He went everywhere preaching salvation by *faith without works.* Passing strange that, at the very time when Chaitanya and his band of earnest associates were causing Bengal to ring with this teaching, Luther and his colleagues were, with equal fervour and with more intelligence, arousing dormant Europe by the same cry! In the far East this movement was the outcome of longings for something better and more soul-satisfying than the dead works of old Hindu ritual furnished; was not the movement in the West somewhat akin to this? earnest souls in each case groaned under an incubus of human inventions, which robbed the soul of liberty and peace and communion with God. Happy was it for Luther that he had the infallible Word to fall back upon for light and guidance! sad for Chaitanya that he had no better light than the light which was in him! If experience has shown the difficulty, even in Christian communities, to maintain the even balance of correlative truths, such as the relation of works to faith and faith to works, is it any wonder that anxious souls in heathendom entirely lost that balance, and knew no *via media* between mechanical legalism and licentious antinomianism? That the practical tendency of Vaishnavaism in Bengal was in this latter direction is too patent to be denied.

It is impossible not to be charmed with the beautiful simplicity and earnest devotion of Chaitanya. His father died in his early childhood; even whilst a youth he experienced

strange yearnings after divine things. An elder brother betook himself to the life of a religious recluse; Chaitanya longed to do the same, but filial piety restrained him; for his mother's sake he resisted his inclinations and, up to the age of twenty-four, protected and provided for her as a dutiful son and an honest citizen. At that age (probably on the death of his mother) he gratified the desire of his heart; he forsook the business of life and gave himself up to the service of religion. For six years he wandered about as an itinerant preacher, a spectacle of self-sacrifice and soul-consuming devotion. He then retired to Cuttack and there spent the next twelve years of his life. In the meantime his followers rapidly multiplied, and from time to time visited him in his retreat. He seems to have been subject to strange emotional affections; repeatedly when preaching he fell into a sort of trance or ecstasy, when he lay for a while seemingly unconscious, simply ejaculating, 'Krishna! Krishna!' By a species of natural sympathy, not unknown in the history of modern revivals, numbers of his followers caught the infection and were similarly affected.

He ever received with cordial hospitality all who approached him; the Brahman, the Chandala, and the Mohammedan, were equally welcome to his shelter, his friendship and his simple fare. 'The mercy of God,' said he, 'regards neither tribe nor family; the Chandala, whose impurity is consumed by the chastening fire of holy faith, is to be reverenced by the wise and not the unbelieving expounder of the Vedas.'[1] Nothing is known of the circumstances of his death; he simply disappeared. His followers had, before his decease, begun to regard him as an incarnation of Vishnu, indeed as Krishna himself; it is no marvel that his remarkable disappearance confirmed their convictions; they said that he had been translated to Vaikuntha. A more probable and natural solution of the problem is that he may

[1] Professor H. H. Wilson's *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus*, vol. i. p. 162.

have found a watery grave. It is certain that on one occasion, when in a state of ecstasy, he rushed into the sea under the impression that it was the sacred Jumna, and was with difficulty saved from drowning. As he dwelt within sight of the sea, it is at least supposable that, under a similar delusion, he may have repeated the same act with fatal consequences.

As has been already intimated, the divorce between faith and works which is a feature of Vaishnavaism in Bengal, too often leads to actual immorality. This is more especially seen in certain offshoots from the society founded by Chaitanya. Some of those sects practise what is called the 'left-handed ritual.' The two sexes periodically meet together for the celebration of religious services; feasting ensues, and this is followed by such orgies as it is a shame even to speak of, orgies which were only too common amongst those to whom the apostles of Christ first proclaimed the Word of Life.

It is an interesting fact that very many of the converts of the Church Missionary Society at Krishnaghur in Bengal, were originally connected with one of those dubious sects. The members of this body are called Karta Bhajas, 'worshippers of the Creator.' Their founder, Ramcharan Pal, lived about the beginning of the present century at Ghospara, near Sukh Sagar in Bengal. In most respects their notions seem to accord with the teaching of Chaitanya; their chief peculiarity is the attributing of a divine character to their Guru, or spiritual guide; they look upon him as the visible representative of Krishna, and worship him accordingly. In connection with those darker features of their observances above alluded to, it is only just to say that the Karta Bhajas by no means boast of them, whilst other sections of the Hindu family severely reprobate and denounce them.[1]

[1] The work of the Church Missionary Society at Benares as well as at Krishnaghur links on, in a most interesting way, with this peculiar sect. A

Contemporary with Ramcharan Pal was Rajah Rammohun Roy, the founder of the society so well known as the 'Brahmă Shamaj.' We confess to certain misgivings as to the propriety of bringing their history within the present chapter. Still there is perhaps stronger reason for viewing them as an outcome of later Hinduism than as an utterly alien sect. Certain it is that their founder was a Hindu of the Hindus, for he was a Brahman; it is also certain that he started the original movement with the Vedas as his avowed basis, and, though the society in its erratic course has receded from that basis and tried the strength of several others, the history of one important section of the society decidedly indicates a return to the original stand-point. That section—the oldest portion of the now divided Shamaj—appears, comet-like, to have well-nigh accomplished its wanderings, and is hastening its way back to its perihelium.

Indeed, taking a broad view of the whole movement from its birth to the present era, we are strongly convinced that it is akin to those we have just been considering. Just as similar

wealthy native gentleman named Jay Narayan, a resident in Calcutta, was on intimate terms with the Founder of the Karta Bhajas. Jay Narayan had for years been oscillating between Hinduism and Christianity; without doubt his sympathies inclined more to the latter than the former faith. Intercourse with a devoted Christian merchant and with the Rev. Daniel Corrie (afterwards Bishop of Madras) furthered this tendency. What is more remarkable is the fact that Ramcharan Pal, the Karta Bhaja leader, also seems to have encouraged his Christian proclivities. Ramcharan is reported to have assured his friend that 'Jesus Christ was the true one, and came out from God.' He seems, moreover, to have advised Jay Narayan to subscribe to Christian objects. In accordance with this advice the wealthy enquirer actually contributed considerable sums of money to the Old Cathedral and the Bible Society in Calcutta. He also founded a school at Benares as a thankoffering for restoration to health. In 1818 he transferred the school with an ample endowment to the above Society; it is now known as Jay Narayan's College, and is a most useful and important institution. It must also be told, as illustrating the vacillating and unsettled turn of his mind, that at the very time when he was thus aiding Christian objects, he extended similar aid to the Hindus: he built several Siva temples and gave four silver hands to the temple of Kali in Calcutta. His dying words were 'that he had been long in search of truth, but had not found it.' Vide *History of the Church Missionary Society in Bengal*, pp. 37–39.

humours in the body manifest themselves by different symptoms in different persons—those external tokens being largely affected by external and local circumstances—so has it been with the humour of dissatisfaction and discontent which for long centuries has marked the thoughtful portion of the Hindu community. There has been a feeling after something better, surer, and more satisfying than orthodox Hinduism offered. This has led anxious souls to cast about for help. According to the times in which they lived they have made accretions of foreign ideas; these, like new patches, they have tacked on to the old Hindu garment; the new additions have ill agreed with the old system; hence rent after rent has occurred, and newer modifications and improvements have been tried.

The Brahmist movement is the *latest* of those efforts. It happened to be cast within the Christian era; it is the offspring and bears the features of that era; it first drew breath when those manifold dissolving agencies inseparably connected with that era were beginning to tell upon Hindu society. English education was already unfolding to the intelligent sons of India the treasures of Western science and literature; the removal of restrictions on missionary effort by the memorable Charter of 1813 had been followed by a wider diffusion of Christian influences; the Scriptures were largely scattered, and missionaries began, without let and hindrance, to preach, lecture, and establish schools in the country. The Presidency cities and other great centres of the population were the first to feel the force of those influences. Of all the cities of India, Calcutta has been the most affected thereby; the dissolving rays have been gathered into a burning focus in this the capital of the Empire; the Bengalees with a feeble physique are intellectually in advance of the more muscular tribes of India, and, probably as much from pride of intellect as from any deeper feeling, they have, during the period of which we are speaking, been specially addicted to change and speculation.

Rammohun Roy, however, was no vain and flimsy theorist, he had real earnestness to prompt him; he was no pedant, he had solid learning to support him. He was a man of great natural talents and of the highest mental culture. He was well versed in Sanscrit and Arabic and Persian, and had also considerable acquaintance with Hebrew and Greek. Of course he was a good English scholar. A man with his turn of mind, and with such varied attainments as he possessed, could not be long in discovering the baselessness of orthodox Hinduism. He was not a man to hide his light under a bushel; what he believed, that he avowed and acted upon. He fearlessly assailed the national faith; he invited learned Pundits and distinguished members of Hindu society to his mansion in Calcutta; and there, with a force of reasoning and a weight of learning which astonished them, exposed the errors to which they were wedded. The inevitable result followed: thousands of bitter foes reviled and hated him, and all the more because they could not answer him.

But, though he rejected the main deductions of Hindu philosophy and the ritual of popular worship, he did not entirely renounce the Hindu scriptures; he honoured them, especially the Vedas, and made selections from them of all that his judgment approved as true and beneficial. He dealt in a similar way with the New Testament, though there is no doubt that his reverence for the Gospels far transcended his regard for the Hindu Shasters; and it is equally indisputable that the Christian writings exercised far more influence on his theory of doctrine than did anything else. He made a free translation into Bengali of the Sermon on the Mount and other discourses of the Saviour, and published them in a book entitled 'Precepts of Jesus.'

It is a strange and somewhat humiliating fact that one of his first converts was an English missionary, a Mr. Adams, of

the Baptist Missionary Society![1] A few more were won over to his views, and the little party, under the style of 'The Unitarian Church of Calcutta,' began to assemble together on Sundays for worship. In 1828 this name seems to have been dropped, and the society resolved itself into what was termed a Vedantist Association. Two years later Rammohun Roy visited England, and there in 1833 he died. Probably at the time of the Rajah's departure the society did not number a dozen members; for a time its existence was of the most precarious nature.

At length the Rajah's mantle fell on a new and interesting convert named Debendra Nath Tagore. This was a gentleman of the highest respectability, and of unaffected piety and simplicity of life and manners. The new president set himself in every way to further the interests of the infant society; but his views were less advanced than those of his abler predecessor; accordingly the basis of the society assumed a more contracted form. Debendra Nath propounded, as the axiom of the association, the declaration 'We consider the Vedas and the Vedas alone as the standard of our faith and principles.' The Christian element at once fell into the shade; the aim of the president was to reform Hinduism by reverting to Vedic doctrine and ritual. Such was the state of things up to 1845. About that period, in some way, doubts seem to have arisen as to the teaching of the Vedas; the question was, whether those holy books were theistic or pantheistic. Consultations were held, extending, it is said, over three years, with the learned pundits of Benares. The upshot was, that the Vedas were decreed to be pantheistic in principle. The authority of the Vedas as a rule of faith was forthwith renounced; the term 'Vedantist'

[1] Which is only a little less remarkable than the fact that an unlettered Zulu should be able to shake the faith of an English Prelate! Doubtless the same reason will stand good in either case—the faith thus shaken was very *shaky* to begin with.

was also surrendered, and henceforward the society adopted the definition of Brahmă Shamaj. Here again appeared an effort to cling to the old system; the name Brahmă, by which the old Hindu philosophers indicated the impersonal Divine Essence, was appropriated, though, of course, it was made to do duty as describing a personal God, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe.

Deprived of the basis of the Vedas the Brahmos were compelled to seek a new foundation for their faith and doctrine. They fell back upon the *Book of Nature*, and, by a process of induction, drew their inferences as to the nature and attributes of the God of Nature. The picture which they drew was of a charming description. Not only had everything been created perfect, but everything was still in that condition; man was destitute of all moral taint, the course of nature was a faultless machine, testifying to the boundless benevolence of its great Author. The one attribute of the Deity then dwelt upon was, his absolute and infinite goodness; he was all love and tenderness; everything showed that the happiness of his creatures was the one aim which actuated him; the idea of punitive inflictions, retributive justice, especially of the *future* punishment of sinners, was discarded as at variance with the teachings of nature and irreconcilable with the notion of a perfectly gracious God. For a while the Brahmos gloried in this pleasant dream; but the dream was not to last; their position was of course assailed by those who wished to lead them to the one true foundation of hope and faith; they were compelled to see that, besides the lovely features of nature on which they were so fond of dilating, there were other features terribly severe in their aspect and altogether out of harmony with their deductions. There were such things as earthquakes, pestilences, famines, and 30,000 different forms of disease, all transpiring under the natural government of the world! What deductions should be drawn from these events?

Step by step the Brahmos were compelled to recede; at length the basis of Nature was given up. It thus became necessary for a *third* time to begin at the beginning, and lay a new foundation for Brahmic belief. In this emergency help came from England and America. The attention of the Brahmos was drawn to the speculations of Francis Newman, Theodore Parker, and some others, on the subject of *Intuition.* Henceforth it was announced that, 'Brahmăism stands upon the rock of Intuition.' The new basis was laid somewhere about 1860, and was hailed with acclamation as a safe and sure and lasting resting-place. It was argued that there could be no more uncertainty, no more disquiet; for God having inscribed all divine and saving knowledge on the tablet of the human heart, all that was needful was for every man to look deep down into his inner consciousness to find an infallible answer to all the yearnings of his soul. Again, for a while. all was sunshine and jubilant satisfaction; those were pitied and censured who clung to 'Book Revelations, creeds and dogmas.' The emancipated Shamaj rejoiced in its freedom from these trammels.

Once more clouds overcast the heyday of content. The true friends of the Brahmos had no difficulty in exposing the insecurity and dubiousness of this new basis; it was but natural to point out that, if the intuitional theory were a fact now, it was a fact in *all past time*; but if such a faculty had been inherent in man, then whence the gross spiritual darkness of past generations which the Brahmos lament? Whence the endless diversities of religious opinion which they deprecate? If Intuition give all the light which man requires without a Revelation, then why has mankind persisted in ignoring that faculty and feeling after supernatural light and guidance? Nay, how was it that the Brahmos themselves had, throughout their previous history, been utterly unconscious that they possessed such an all-sufficient, internal guide; and how had they at length become acquainted with this priceless faculty?—why, so far as

appeared, had not the writings of foreign Intuitionalists revealed the latent faculty to them, they might still have been ignorant of its existence. Here, then, was a case of a 'Book Revelation' making known to them the faculty which was to dispense with all book revelations!

All these were knotty points and unpleasant difficulties in the way of the new theory. The difficulties did not diminish when, as time advanced, it became evident that the intuitive faculty differed in different Brahmos. Notes of discord and clashing theories disturbed the repose of the Shamaj itself; evidently the cry of 'Peace! Peace!' had been raised too soon.

A little before the opening of the Intuitional era, an intelligent and thoughtful young man, named Kesab Chunder Sen, joined the society. He threw himself heart and soul into the movement; he cordially accepted the latest theory, and became, there is no doubt, one of the most devout and earnest members that the Brahmo community possessed. In respect of devotional feeling the venerable president and the ardent young convert were one. We believe, for a time, they were bound together by sentiments of the deepest affection; but the piety of the one differed from that of the other in an important particular. The one was *conservative*, the other was *progressive*. The president said 'Rest and be thankful!' the other responded 'Go on unto perfection!' A chief point of divergence related to certain Hindu usages which the president saw no harm in retaining—the retention of which would certainly soften the asperity of orthodox Hindus and also lighten the cross to be borne by Brahmo converts.

During the Vedantist phase the doctrines of transmigration and absorption into the Deity had been held; with the renunciation of the Vedic basis, these points were also surrendered. As a matter of *principle* caste had also been denounced, but, as a matter of *expediency*, Brahmos were allowed to retain their

caste distinctions; idolatry in every form had been avowedly abandoned, but occasional conformity to national worship for peace' sake was winked at; especially in the celebration of Brahmo marriages all the old idolatrous customs were allowed to be practised. The soul of the fervent young convert recoiled against such unworthy truckling and tampering; he longed to sweep away every vestige of the old corruption; he was willing to do what was right, and brave the consequences of a breach with the old system.

But it was not merely on points of external observance that those two representative men differed; the divergence had a deeper basis still. Debendra Nath Tagore had never sympathised in the leanings of his distinguished predecessor towards Christianity; the Christian scriptures had no special charm for him. On the other hand, Kesab Chunder Sen conceived a regard for the Bible, certainly not less, perhaps *greater* even than Rammohun Roy had entertained for it. It is no secret, for he himself has avowed it, that he has studied that sacred volume with singular delight and fervour. He has not scrupled to speak of it as the best of books. It was hardly possible for him to be such a student of the Bible and not to imbibe sentiments of veneration for Him who is the pervading theme of that holy book. The most earnest Christian could hardly use language more expressive of devotional regard for Christ than Kesab himself has used.

Already the Shamaj was beginning to present the spectacle of 'a house divided against itself.' Around the grave old president clustered the seniors of the society, whilst the younger and more active spirits supported the views of Kesab. The inevitable result followed. In 1865 a schism took place; the conservative body rallied around their leader as the Adi (original) Brahmă Shamaj, whilst the juniors formed themselves into a new society, called 'the Progressive Brahmos,' with Kesab as their head.

From the day of the rupture the fate of the original Shamaj was sealed; whatever vitality the Brahmă society had at any time possessed, it was derived from its professed conflict with popular error; the continuance of this life involved decision and progress. The Adi Shamaj temporised and refused to advance. It could not remain stationary; retrogression has been its subsequent history. Some three years ago, a prominent member of the Old Society, with the sanction of its present head, Gyanendra Nath Tagore, the son of the former president, delivered a lecture in Calcutta, in which he undertook to establish the superiority of Hinduism to every other form of religion, Christianity included. Thus conservative Brahmăism has virtually retraced its steps, and once more reposes in the bosom of Hinduism.

The Progressive Brahmos naturally commanded the sympathy and encouraged the hopes of Christian people in India. Not a few of these confidently predicted their ultimate conversion to Christianity. The earlier tendencies of the 'Reformers' (for such they are sometimes called) went far to justify these hopes. Severed from their conservative brethren, divorced from old Hindu ties, they not unnaturally gravitated for a while towards Christianity; they spoke of the followers of Jesus as their 'Christian brethren.' They moreover adopted Christian phraseology to an extent which might well surprise and delight the sanguine. They called their Shamaj a 'Church;' they spoke of 'divine inspiration,' 'the Holy Spirit,' 'righteousness,' 'justification,' 'sanctification,' 'atonement,' 'redemption,' 'regeneration,' 'the kingdom of God.' These and many other terms of Christian theology they eagerly appropriated. Some of their utterances were positively startling for their boldness. On one occasion an article in the 'Indian Mirror,' the organ of this party said: 'We would define a Christian as one who eats the flesh of Christ and drinks the blood of Christ, and is thus in-

corporated into him.'[1] It was our good fortune to be present at the delivery of a famous lecture by the leader of the new society, in which he astounded Hindus, Brahmos, and Christians alike, by his expressions of devout regard for the Author of Christianity. The subject was 'Jesus Christ, Europe, and Asia.' In the midst of a discourse of singular eloquence and power, he said—

> In Palestine, Jesus Christ, the greatest and truest benefactor of mankind, lived and died. Here he originated that mighty religious movement which has achieved such splendid results in the world, and scattered the blessings of saving truth on untold nations and generations. The world presented almost one unbroken scene of midnight darkness on all sides. A light was needed. Jesus Christ was thus a necessity of the age; he appeared in the fulness of time. How he lived and died; how his words, spoken in simple but thrilling eloquence, flew like wildfire, and enflamed the enthusiasm of the multitudes to whom he preached; how, in spite of awful discouragements, he succeeded in establishing the kingdom of God in the hearts of some at least; and how ultimately he sacrificed himself for the benefit of mankind, are facts of which most of you here present are no doubt aware. He laid down his life that God might be glorified. I have always regarded the Cross as a beautiful emblem of self-sacrifice unto the glory of God—one which is calculated to quicken the higher feelings and aspirations of the heart, and to purify the soul. . . . Is there a single soul in this large assembly who would scruple to ascribe extraordinary greatness and supernatural moral heroism to Jesus Christ and him crucified? Was not he, who by his wisdom illumined, and by his power saved, a dark and wicked world—was not he who has left us such a priceless legacy of divine truth, and whose blood has wrought such wonders for eighteen hundred years—was not he above ordinary humanity? Blessed Jesus, immortal child of God! For the world he lived and died. May the world appreciate him and follow his precepts!

It is hardly possible to read such glowing utterances—view-

[1] It is hardly to be wondered at that a Roman Catholic paper in Calcutta pounced upon this statement with the utmost avidity, and rejoiced at the 'Catholic' tendency of the Shamaj!

ing them, as, of course, we are bound to do, as the expressions of sincerity—without an impression that the speaker was 'not far from the kingdom of God.' From all we know of the religious history of the lecturer, we have very little doubt that he did at one time advance to the very borders of that kingdom—another step would have landed him within it. Alas! that step was not taken. We believe the lecture referred to was the culminating point of his progress. To stand still in such a matter was impossible, to advance would have been to bow to the divinity of Jesus and accept his vicarious sacrifice. Retrogression was the only alternative. This result all too clearly and sadly ensued.

Great were the searchings of heart awakened by that memorable address. Hopeful Christians rejoiced, Hindus and Original Brahmos sneered, at the Christian proclivities of the lecturer; not a few progressive Brahmos were scandalised. It was the hour of trial, the season of moral probation. The prevailing commotion enabled the lecturer to gauge the depth and trace the course of public opinion; it probably led him to weigh his own convictions and motives. However this may be, it was not long before the first downward and backward step was taken; in a subsequent lecture on 'Great Men,' the bugle sounded the note of *retreat*. In that address Kesab Chunder Sen repudiated all idea of a divine incarnation such as Christianity teaches; in his opinion, every man who made a mark in his day, every great moral reformer and religious leader, might be termed 'a divine incarnation,' for a divine unction prompted and sustained the movement of which he was the instrument. In this way, and in no other, was that holy Being who had been described in such ecstatic terms in the previous lecture, to be regarded; in this respect Jesus Christ occupied a common platform with 'Moses, Mohammed, Nanak, Chaitanya, and other regenerators of mankind!'

The brow of the hill being once surmounted, the descent

has been singularly rapid. The halo which once surrounded the head of Jesus has faded away; to Brahmo eyes He has now 'neither form nor comeliness, that they should desire Him;' the matchless precepts of Jesus, too, have lost their glory and perfection. In a lecture given only two years ago, the Brahmo leader criticised the 'Golden Rule of Christ,' and stigmatised it as 'utilitarian,' and as involving 'false doctrine.' Says he, 'I emphatically protest against it; heaven teaches us a much higher doctrine of charity.'[1] A little later still, the organ of the society thus vaunts the superiority of Brahmăism to, and its victory over, Christianity: 'By showing a higher ideal of faith and spiritual development, the Brahmă Shamaj has at once stopt the progress of Christianity.'

Happily Christianity in India is unconscious of any peculiar detriment to its interests as resulting from this new Brahmic development; indeed, this is doubtless a case in which open enmity is better than dubious friendship. But it saddens one's heart to see how a morn of light and hope has ended in a night of gloom and hate. 'He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.'

Such being the attitude of Brahmăism to Christianity, no one will be surprised to learn that change and declension have marked the movement in other particulars. The most ominous sign of deterioration is a disposition to make light of sin. Formerly, the Progressive Brahmos regarded sin as a terrible evil; they spoke of it, indeed, much as Christians do. In one of their earliest publications they say, 'That the frightful nature of sin deserves a punishment whose severity is beyond

[1] The *finer gold* than that of the golden rule, which the lecturer had discovered, was the principle of self-sacrifice for the good of others—a principle to which he imagines the golden rule to be opposed! Surely we may say, how has the fine gold become dim! when we contrast this later enunciation with the following passage from his first and most famous lecture: 'The precepts which enjoin this virtue, self-sacrifice, are so numerous and emphatic and prominent in the Gospel, that one feels no difficulty whatever in recognising it as the one great truth which threads the whole narrative of Christ's life and ministry.'

the reach of conception, no one can venture to question.'[1] Very different is the teaching of later Brahmăism. Now we are told 'Sin is not, as many people suppose, a positive evil; it is, like darkness, *negative*, not positive. Man's grossest vices are only a negation of godliness.' And again, 'We have learnt to believe that to fight with past sin is to fight with a shadow, for such a thing does not really exist, and is altogether an imaginary evil.'[2]

Our readers will remember that formerly the Brahmos evolved from *nature* the idea of a God all love and mercy—too kind to punish; it is a curious fact that the Brahmos of to-day have found their way to the *opposite pole*, and declare that God is all justice—too just to forgive. The blessed affirmation of Scripture, 'There is forgiveness with Thee,' is with them an absolute *negative*. They declare 'God cannot forgive; an exact equivalent of punishment must be endured for every offence.' *We* know how the two extremes meet—how 'mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other;' *they* reject that solution of the difficulty, and so have to choose between the horns of a dilemma. The adoption of the sterner conclusion—inflexible justice—is perhaps strange, yet explicable. Free and entire forgiveness, though pleasant, is *humbling*, for it carries with it the idea of dependence and obligation. On the other hand, the en-

[1] From a Brahmic tract on 'Atonement and Salvation.'

[2] The above statements occurred in two leading articles of the *Indian Mirror* some two and a half years ago. The idea involved in the last sentence seems to be that, as regards past sin, 'bygones are bygones, and are absolutely irremediable: all we have to do is to take care for our present and future conduct; to distress ourselves about past transgression when naught can remedy it and in any case its consequences must follow, is futile and foolish.' This theory is therefore closely allied to the Brahmic notion of divine justice described in the next paragraph.

Only a few days after the appearance of the above articles on sin, we met with a singular illustration of their practical effect. We were conversing with a native gentleman who, to our knowledge, had long been burdened with a sense of sin and danger. That morning we put to him the question we had put before, 'Is it peace?' He replied, 'Yes, he had found peace, for,' quoting the words of the Brahmist organ, he said, 'he had got a new view of sin; he now saw it to be merely a negative, not a positive evil!'

durance of the full penalty of sin obviates these humiliating experiences; and then, sin itself being 'a merely negative, not positive, evil,' its consequences may with safety be braved and endured!

As to what may be the future history of the Progressive Brahmos—how long the society will exist, and what further developments it may make—we know not. One thing, however, may safely be averred, that, *as a religious movement, it has utterly failed.* Its influence, which was never great, is becoming more and more circumscribed. As for the great body of educated orthodox Hindus, they regard it with contemptuous indifference; they may not have much care for, or faith in, the old national creed, but the idea of exchanging it for a system whose constant mutations show its basis to be a quicksand and its promises a myth, strikes them as absurd in the extreme. The rapidly increasing body of *unorthodox* Hindus regard the movement with similar feelings of distrust. They are conscious of a void, but they feel that Brahmăism cannot fill up the vacuum. As respects the uneducated masses, the movement has simply not touched them; its rotations have been outside their orbit.[1]

The class from which probably nine-tenths of the Brahmo

[1] Amongst the dialectic agencies which have told heavily against Brahmăism has been a series of most able pamphlets by the Rev. Samuel Dyson, Principal of the Cathedral Mission College, Calcutta. The first of these, on 'Brahmic Intuition,' was published in 1864; this was followed by another on 'Revelation.' Then, as successive Brahmic developments appeared, five other tracts followed, dealing with those various phases of error. The Progressive movement has thus been sedulously tracked through all its tortuous windings; no sooner had it found a resting-place in some new theory than its repose was rudely disturbed and its novel position proved to be untenable. At first the Brahmo leaders endeavoured to answer the arguments of their doughty assailant; but, by-and-bye, they declined the contest and preferred to maintain a discreet silence. At length, when urged by a secular journal either to answer or to admit their defeat, they petulantly replied.—'The Brahmos are more infallible than the Pope.' Of course thoughtful Hindus drew their own conclusions from all this; and if they inferred that the silence of the Brahmos was not so much a matter of volition as of *logical necessity*, it is not to be wondered at.

recruits have been drawn has been that of youths fresh from school. The movement had special attractions for such ardent young minds; it required but a slight acquaintance with Western science and literature to shake their faith in old Hinduism; it was the prevailing fashion of the members of their class to assert their superiority to the trammels of superstition; they had become 'wiser than the ancients,' they would rise to their privileges and walk in the light of their intuition; they would move onward in the path of reform and liberty. It was easy to do all this; for, although conversion to Christianity involved a terrible cross in the severance of social ties, no such a penalty fell upon the convert to Brahmăism; he could still dwell in the bosom of his family, still be respected in Hindu society; the door, moreover, for a return to orthodox conformity was ever open to him.

Not a few avail themselves of that open door; the following lamentation of the Brahmist organ admits this fact: 'Yesterday we saw thousands of educated youths in all parts of the country marching valiantly forward in the path of reform, and crushing all the evils in the land; to-day hundreds may be seen stealthily retracing their steps, and ignobly vowing allegiance to ancestral divinities and ancient errors.'

As regards the *numerical* importance of the Shamaj, very exaggerated impressions have prevailed. Doubtless the somewhat boastful rhetorical figures employed by Brahmos themselves on this point have favoured misconception. The illusion, however, was dissipated by the Government census of Calcutta, taken three years ago. It is well known that the capital of India, as it was the birth-place of this movement, so is it the scene of its most successful operations. Our readers may be astonished to learn that, instead of the thousands of Brahmos with which public rumour had credited the Shamaj, the census returns showed no more than *ninety-two* enrolled members!

This movement, therefore, view it in whatever light we may,

must be termed a *failure.* It is but one of the manifold efforts which the religious history of India reveals to find a 'more excellent way' than the old and unsatisfying system of Hinduism. Brahmăism has failed as other reforming schemes have done before it. In one respect it has *deserved* to fail, for it has deliberately ignored great fundamental truths which Hinduism has upheld. The need of a divine revelation, of an atonement for sin, and of some incarnation of the deity, are truths which Hinduism holds in common with Christianity. Devout Hindus for 3,000 years back have been clinging to these truths. Brahmăism meets those aspirations with a cold negation; it offers a stone when the children ask bread, and, for a fish, gives them a serpent; Christianity alone satisfies those soul-cravings, for it points to the one true revelation of God's will, it reveals the only efficient sacrifice for sin, and presents to the believing gaze the one true incarnation in the person of the Godman Christ Jesus.

THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

CHAPTER VIII.

DISSOLVING AGENCIES.

'I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it; and it shall be no more, until he shall come whose right it is; and I will give it him.' (Ezek. xxi. 27.)

A PECULIAR and suggestive phenomenon again and again greets the eye of an Indian traveller; he beholds a mass of vegetation growing out of the roof of an ancient temple; besides grass and tangled weeds, he may sometimes see trees of considerable size thriving in that strange locality, with nothing, as it seems, but the stones to subsist upon; there is a vigorous pepul shooting its head aloft, there is a spreading banyan with its pendant feelers; and how have these trees come there? The answer is simple enough—a breath of wind or a little bird has at some time deposited a living seed on the dome of the idol shrine; the accumulated dust of centuries in the many crevices of the roof has given it a home; the silent dews or the pouring rains, together with the vital rays of the sun, have caused it to germinate. By-and-bye a sprout has appeared, but so small as hardly to arrest attention; months have elapsed; all the while the roots have been insinuating themselves into the interstices of the masonry; at length the priests discern the growing mischief; they ascend the roof and try to eradicate it, but it is too late; they cut down the tree level with the stone, but that avails not—the roots are there still; inevitably, in a few weeks

the tree reappears. It is a hopeless case; the priests feel it to be so, they suffer the evil to go on, assured of what the upshot must be. For a long time no serious damage appears, the tree flourishes and the temple remains intact; but it is only a question of time—the dead temple must yield to the living tree. You visit the temple five years later, and you see the roots have not only penetrated and intersected the roof, but are making their way down the walls. As you gaze upwards you may trace ominous rents and fissures in the hoary dome of bygone centuries. You repeat your visit a few years hence, and you see the roots have already reached the soil; now the tree develops with unwonted vigour and rapidity: the rents become gaping wounds; disintegration is followed by demolition; piece by piece the old shrine crumbles to the ground, and at length naught but a majestic tree marks the spot where it once stood.[1]

Such is a true and life-like picture of the present condition of Hinduism. The seed of truth has, by various agencies, been deposited on the roof of the old system. The seeds have been manifold, the agencies have been multiform. The seeds, not only of religious truth, but of scientific, philosophic, historic and social truth, have fallen upon the ancient dome. Contact with Western thought, Western usages, Western literature and science; the introduction of Western improvements in locomotion, medicine, intercommunication and sanitary organisation—all these things, and many more which it is hard to particularise—have subtlely, steadily, surely, been telling upon the antiquated system. It is difficult to define the nature and limits of the influence exerted by those several agencies; indeed, it is *impossible* to do so, for one thing has interlaced with another, one tendency has facilitated or checked another; but

[1] Scores of times have we passed such a tree to the south of Calcutta; the temple which it vanquished has utterly gone; its only traces are a rude outline of its form, and a solitary block of masonry in the circling stem.

of the general effect there is no room for doubt—the seeds of truth have been germinating, the trees of truth have been growing, the fabric of falsehood and error has been yielding, and no power on earth or in hell can prevent the final issue. Hinduism is doomed; huge rents and fissures tell of a coming crash. We say not that its fall is at hand; it may be yet remote; but we fearlessly aver that its days are numbered—it is smitten with an incurable tendency to decay and dissolution; and already, with the eye of faith, we behold the glorious tree of truth rearing its victorious head over the idol fanes of India, whilst its emancipated sons gladly shelter under its branches.

'He that sowed the seed is the Son of Man.' No thoughtful man can take a broad view of those varied influences and agencies which are ministering to the grand result, without discerning herein the hand of Him who is 'wonderful in counsel and mighty in operation.' All truth is from Him, and He best knows in what ways, at what times, and in what degrees, to present the different aspects of truth to his creatures. It is a reflection of the deepest interest and weightiest import to Christian minds, that the tendencies and influences we speak of are the *outcome of the Christian era* in India. Hinduism, as we have seen, has had a chequered and, in some respects, a perilous history; it has been assailed both from within and without; but it lived on practically unshaken by every assault: if for a while it bent its head to the raging tempest, it again reared itself up as the monarch of the forest which no passing storm could uproot; Buddhism vanished before it, and Mohammedanism failed to subdue it. When the sceptre of India lapsed to Christian hands, Hinduism emerged from a struggle of 2,300 years with those two formidable adversaries, unscathed and unshattered. It had doubtless received some slight tinge of the systems with which it had been in contact; it had moreover seen numerous sects arise within its bosom, but all this affected not its stability; moored to the great sheet-

anchor of *caste*, the old vessel had rode securely through raging tempests and shifting vicissitudes. Caste is the essence and backbone of Hinduism, and it may safely be declared that the iron bands of caste showed no signs of yielding until the influences above described began to play upon them. Three out of the four original castes had practically been obliterated; but caste, as an institution, still held the people of India with an unyielding and relentless grasp.

It holds them in its grasp still; it is still a terrible evil and a formidable barrier to progress of every kind. A superficial observer of Hindu society might be tempted to say, 'All things remain as they were for ages back.' On the other hand, those who look beneath the surface, those who explore the inner region of native thought and feeling, do not fail to discern clear traces of change and decay. Hinduism and caste are not what they were fifty years ago. Educated and thoughtful natives universally admit this; to some these signs of dissolution are a matter of anxious concern, to the majority they are a matter of utter indifference, to others they are a ground of positive satisfaction; but, whatever view may be taken of the fact, the fact itself is not disputed.

We do not mean to imply that these tokens of disintegration are everywhere discernible; we are speaking, be it remembered, of those classes who have come under the influence of the dissolving agencies spoken of. The influence itself affects in different degrees different sections of the community; it radiates as from a centre, its force being felt in a decreasing ratio as it advances, until at length all trace of it is lost. There are vast tracts of the country and dense masses of the population, to all appearance, utterly unaffected by this influence; but those regions and masses are just those which have been *outside its sphere*; the nearer you approach the centre the more marked do the effects of that influence become. We mention this to show the actual source of the acknowledged tendency to decay

and dissolution. The forces at work are not indigenous; they are derived from without, and they synchronise with the advent of British rule.

If the portion of the population most affected by those dissolving agencies be a small minority as compared to the mass of the people, it must be borne in mind that it is incomparably the most *influential* portion, and in number and influence it is steadily growing. If Hinduism and caste flee before the light of the cities and the schools, they are in evil case; they may shelter with the moles and bats in the villages, but that will not save them.

We have said that caste is the essence and mainstay of Hinduism; to whatever extent caste is weakened, Hinduism is proportionately endangered. It is not less curious than instructive to trace the unequal conflict which caste has had to maintain. It has found itself again and again in collision with modern influences which were too strong for it; it has protested and struggled, but in vain; step by step it has had to recede before its potent adversaries.

Twenty-two years ago the first railway was opened in India. The projectors of that railway thought only of their dividends; they had no quarrel with caste, but caste had a quarrel with the railway. Caste forbad a Brahman to sit on the same seat with a Sudra or a Mussalman: what was to be done? The Brahman protested that he could never use the railway; but even Brahmans are mortal, and, like ordinary mortals, they understand what suits their convenience. This was a case which appealed to their *understandings* in two senses—they found that by using the railway they could do a journey in a day which, by using their *legs*, would occupy them a month; the temptation was strong to consult their convenience and pocket their prejudices. Accordingly, one or two Brahmans stepped into a railway carriage, devoutly hoping no one else would get in; but railway guards were no respecters of caste, and so, *nolens*

volens, the Brahmans found themselves shoulder to shoulder with low-castes and out-castes, and hated Mohammedans. It was a terrible ordeal, but 'what can't be cured must be endured,' and so now the Brahmans endure the indignity with delightful equanimity. This is one blow to caste, and when it is remembered that a network of railways is already beginning to cover India, the importance of this dissolving agency will be readily perceived.

Again, in utter subversion of caste rules, multitudes of Brahmans have accepted posts of emolument in Government or mercantile offices. The ancient law of caste prohibits the Brahman from holding any secular post whatever; he must devote his whole time to the study of the Shasters and to sacred ministrations; he must live on the free-will offerings of his disciples; the only language he must care for is the divine Sanscrit, and in that sacred tongue must he perform his daily devotions—devotions of a most elaborate and intricate kind. Generally speaking a *decent poverty* has marked the Brahmans; but with the increase of their race the difficulty of procuring subsistence has been seriously felt. Even before Christian times, a relaxation of the stringent rules of their order had taken place. But the liberal and impartial rule of the English at once threw open to the people most tempting chances of preferment; it was not in human nature to withstand these allurements; Government thought of nothing less than to damage caste by presenting these openings, but the damage ensued nevertheless. Caste had again to give way. Intelligent young Brahmans, by thousands, exchanged Sanscrit for English, and the holy duties of their order for the secular but more lucrative service of their Christian rulers. As a matter of necessity the daily ritual fell into desuetude, and, as a matter of course, the reverence of the inferior castes for the divine Brahman began to wane. Now, in all the great centres of English influence you may see the Brahman jostled without awe by those

who once worshipped him; if he bear himself as a gentleman, he is honoured as such, but the homage of bygone times is denied him, nor does he even profess to claim it. This is another heavy blow to caste.

Medicine and surgery have likewise entered the lists with caste. The rules of that institution prohibited a Hindu from taking any potion prepared by unclean and heretical hands; the same rules prohibited any Hindu from studying the European science of anatomy, for anatomical researches would be destructive of caste. This was a position of fierce contest; the old institution manfully struggled for the victory, and, twenty-five years ago, the issue seemed doubtful. The first attempt to establish a medical college in Calcutta was singularly trying; a howl of execration denounced the idea of Hindu youths dissecting a dead body. But, *veritas prævalebit,* it was a patent fact that, in cases where native doctors killed their patients or suffered them to die, European doctors might have saved them. 'Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life.' At first surreptitiously, then more openly, Hindus began to call in European doctors. Then, as the value of European treatment came to be understood, intelligent and needy Hindus discerned a powerful inducement to seize the scalpel and brave the consequences. Caste was again worsted, though no one *meant* to damage it. Crowds of Hindu youths, Brahmans and others, now, without let or hindrance, study European medicine and surgery; whilst scores of native doctors, efficiently trained on the foreign principle, are practising with profit and acceptance amongst their countrymen.

Sanitary regulations work in the same direction. Some five years ago the Municipal commissioners of Calcutta determined to bring pure water into the city. Up to that period the inhabitants had been drinking the foul water of the river Hooghly, or the not less foul water of tanks in their compounds. The municipal water was to be brought, after being thoroughly puri-

fied, a distance of sixteen miles through pipes. The pipes were to be connected with hydrants planted along the streets, out of which the people might draw the water. 'But,' said the Brahmans, 'it is impossible for us to make use of the water. As all other castes are to have access to the same hydrants, we, to avoid contamination, must stand aloof.' So said caste; but pure water and health were mightier than caste. To save appearances, the Brahmans convened a council of learned heads to deliberate the *pros* and *cons* of the case. There was no doubt in anyone's mind as to the result. The report of the pundits was all that any tender conscience could wish; they fished out of the Shasters a few convenient texts which sufficiently settled the point. One text, as if borrowing the words of a *better* book, said, 'To the pure all things are pure;' therefore, orthodox Hindus had only to assume their personal purity and drink to their heart's content. Another text, breathing a spirit of *muscular* Hinduism, said, 'Health first, religion next.' Another declared that 'All flowing water is pure.' But the downright practical and clinching passage came last: 'Impure objects become pure by paying the value of them,'—argument, 'We pay the *water-rate*; *ergo*, the water to us becomes pure.' This argument, we imagine, was not less satisfactory to the municipal authorities than to the Brahmans. Thus followed another blow to caste. At this day, without scruple or protest, the Brahmans quaff the water of the hydrants along with all the other castes.

Can any thoughtful man help tracing in these things the operations of a divine and Almighty hand? 'I pull down,' says the Holy One, 'and I destroy.' He uses whom and what He will to effect his own gracious purpose.

But we have a still more remarkable element in the dissolving agencies to speak of. Without doubt, *English education* is by far the most potent of all those agencies. Now, English education, as given by the Government of India, was meant to be conservative in its character. Strict and absolute neutrality

was to mark it; in matters of a religious and social nature, it was resolved that it should leave the natives as it found them; no Christian instruction was to be given, no infringement of caste rules to be permitted. So said *man*: but what said *God?* Nothing to our mind is more solemnly suggestive than the issue. In silent majesty, as it were, the Ruler of the universe looked down on this scheme. 'Work out your own plans,' said He, 'and I will show that *I am working by you.*' The Government determined to be neutral in *religion*, but they could not be neutral in *science*. If they taught science at all—and how could they dispense with it?—they were compelled to teach *true* science; but to teach true science was to lay the axe to the root of Hinduism, for popular Hinduism rests upon *false* science. The two are so indissolubly connected that they live or die together —the science is an integral part of the religion. Very curious is the popular science of the Hindus: these are their notions. The world is not a globe, but an extended triangular plain; it rests on the head of a huge serpent, the serpent is poised on the back of an elephant, the elephant stands upon a prodigious tortoise. But here the science stops—what the tortoise rests on they have never yet found out! Earthquakes are occasioned by the elephant giving himself a shake! and eclipses are owing to a giant, named Rahu, taking a bite out of the sun or moon! There are oceans of curds and sugar-cane juice, and a mountain, behind which the sun reposes.[1] Such are the notions of science

[1] It must not be supposed that the Sages of India had no better notion of science than the above absurdities imply. It is an indisputable fact, and one which can only command our wondering admiration for those Sages, that they anticipated the system of Copernicus ages before his birth. The following passage occurs in the Aitareya-Brahmana: 'The sun neither sets nor rises. When people think to themselves the sun is setting, he only changes about after reaching the end of the day, and makes night below and day to what is on the other side. Then, when people think he rises in the morning, he only shifts himself about after reaching the end of the night, and makes day below and night to what is on the other side. In fact he never does set at all.' The truth is, those Sages played the same part with science that they did with theology. They fostered, or at least tolerated, two aspects in either case. They presented the aspect of truth to the learned, and

which Hindu boys take with them to a government school; as they pass from class to class, they are compelled to see that Hindu science is false—manifestly false. But, as we have said, the theology so dovetails with the science that they stand or fall together—to disbelieve one involves the disbelief of the other. Then, again, the study of history is another antagonistic force telling against the old system. Hinduism has no history; it has, instead, an abundance of legends and fables, all which vanish like the mists of the early morn before the rising sun of historic testimony.

Thus it comes to pass that government education—the avowed object of which was not to disturb the religious status of the people, is not only disturbing, but utterly *destroying* that status. In a matter of this kind, we prefer to let the educated natives speak for themselves. Little more than two years ago the 'Hindu Patriot,' the leading organ of this class in Calcutta, made the following singular admission:—

> The effects of English education on the Hindu mind have been of a remarkable character. In the first place it would not be too much to say that every Hindu who has received an English education has felt its influence. In the next place, all who have received English education have not merely imbibed new and *un-Hindu* ideas, but have adopted un-Hindu manners and habits as well, and they who have been thus influenced by English education are many, many times 300,000.[1]

the aspect of delusive fancy to the illiterate. The latter aspect in each case, as a matter of course, has become the popular one. Surely it is a noteworthy circumstance that popular theology and popular science present those very openings in the joints of the harness whereby the deadly arrow of truth is piercing the heart of Hinduism.

[1] The article from which the above extract is taken was written as a critique upon the statement put forth in a *Christian* paper, that there were 300,000 native Christians in India. The Editor of the *Hindu Patriot* does not challenge the accuracy of that statement; his sole object is to show that the missionaries must not take all, or even the major part, of the credit to themselves for the 'un-Hindu' tendencies of the people—a hint which the missionaries can the more readily accede to, inasmuch as they never doubted the truth of the *Patriot's* declaration.

After long years of familiar intercourse with educated natives in the capital of India, we thoroughly endorse the above statement. Without doubt, English education is destroying Hinduism; by which we mean, it is destroying *faith* in the old system of religion. Hinduism survives in its externals; multitudes of educated men still yield a respectful homage to the decaying system, but they *believe it not*. When the present century opened on India, Hinduism was a substantial reality—it lived in the affections and convictions of the people; at that time the Dagon of caste and idolatry was a solid block; it gave out sparks of indignation when smitten; now it returns a *hollow ring* to the blow of its assailants, telling of internal decay and approaching dissolution. The sighs of Brahmans over their waning influence, the lamentations of old-fashioned Hindus over the degeneracy of the times, the placid indifference of the great body of educated natives as to the fate of the national system, and the avowed scepticism of multitudes of that class towards the faith of their fathers, all tell the same story.[1]

[1] The above extract from the *Hindu Patriot* is the utterance of English-speaking natives; they, as a body, are avowedly *unorthodox*. It will interest the reader to hear the testimony borne by a vernacular paper which represents *orthodox* Hindus; it will be seen that the evidence as to the decay of the old system is uniform. The *Bharat Britya* says: 'No one who has past the age of fifty, or is bordering thereon, can be ignorant of the great contrast between the worship of this and a former period. Young people have only to ask their seniors to be convinced of this. Formerly the worship was really an act of the mind, now it is a matter of nothing but outward show and amusement. This is a thing greatly to be regretted.'

In the very article from which this extract is taken there is a hit at the inconsistencies of certain Europeans peculiarly keen and incisive; and, considering the quarter whence the censure proceeds, it is eminently suggestive. The Editor is dealing with the professed scorn of Europeans for vulgar idolatry. He says, 'But what we have to say to this is, what are the Sahebs doing themselves? On the one hand, they go about glorying that they are not idolators; on the other hand, they do not hesitate to encourage idolatry and amuse themselves with it. How many distinguished Sahebs this Doorga Festival are attending by invitation at the houses of our great men! How many Sahebs of high station and respectability come together to note their approval of the dancing of harlots! How many are there who do not object to eat meat in an idol's temple! Is this the conduct of non-idolators? How very difficult it is to tell a man's mind by his words!'

If there be anything to regret in the recent visit of the Prince of Wales to

The very compromises which Hinduism and caste have reluctantly made, the very efforts of their advocates to uphold them, illustrate the same tendency to decay. An attentive observer may note a hundred traces of infringement of orthodoxy amongst the orthodox themselves; despite themselves, they are compelled to yield. These changes relate to dress, diet, and various usages of life which the changing times have forced upon them or familiarised them with. One of the most noteworthy of these traces is a growing taste for animal food. Hinduism, of course, utterly prohibits the taking of life in any form, especially for the purposes of food; but multitudes of Hindus have come to like animal food. In order to settle the difficulty with equal satisfaction both to the conscience and the stomach, some ten or twelve years ago the following expedient was hit upon in Calcutta. That city is named after the goddess Kali, whose principal shrine is in its suburbs. Now, Kali is avowedly fond of blood; so little butcher shops began to appear in different parts of the city, with an image of Kali to sanctify them. The butchers slaughter their animals before the image, and thus the flesh becomes holy, and thousands of Hindus daily purchase and eat it, whose fathers would have shuddered at the thought of such profanity.

Some six years ago the heads of orthodox Hindu society in that city became alarmed at the retrograde movements of the day. They determined to meet the difficulty by founding a society for the maintenance of the old system. The members comprised all that was aristocratic and influential of the particular class represented. They gave their society a high-sounding title; it was termed *Sanatana Dharma Rakhini Shabha*, 'the Society for the Defence of the Eternal Religion.' It was inaugurated with a great flourish of trumpets. No attempts were made to set forth the truth or reasonableness of Hinduism;

India it is that he, without any fault of his own, was more than once placed in the false position which is here so naively censured.

no efforts were put forth to parry the argumentative blows under which it was staggering. The programme merely appealed to the patriotic sentiments of the Hindus, and asked them as a nation to rally round their ancient standard. The thoughtful reader will not fail to discern in the acknowledged necessity for this Society a confirmation of the great feature we are insisting upon—it was an effort to prop up the old fabric which was felt to be tottering. This fact is verified by the measures of defence resorted to. Orthodox Hinduism has virtually no remedy for the loss of caste; this priceless boon once gone is gone for ever. But so many Hindus in this nineteenth century were losing caste, that it became necessary for orthodox Hindus to stretch the hitherto rigid principle—the renegades were so numerous that a back-door must be opened for their recovery. Accordingly, one of the first measures of the Society was the decreeing of a short and easy method of return for wanderers! Nor must we omit to mention that the happy solution arrived at in the knotty question of 'Caste *versus* pure water' was achieved under the auspices of this very Society. Can you, good reader, help seeing that, despite itself, the Society for the *defence* of the old system is, all unwittingly, a Society for its *dissolution?*

As we have before said, it is impossible to particularise the manifold agencies of disintegration now at work in India. They are literally *legion* as regards their number; some are of minor, some of major importance, but the drift and tendency of all is in one direction. Changes in Government policy and legislation, necessitated by change of public opinion, constitute another element in those dissolving agencies. The time was when Government officials managed the endowments of idol shrines, and Government troops were paraded in honour of idol festivals; that day has happily gone for ever. Forty years ago thousands of Hindu widows immolated themselves on their husbands' funeral pile, the British Government winking at the enormity; now that horrible rite is penal, and practically extinct. A

quarter of a century ago a respectable Hindu trembled at the thought of visiting England, for to cross the 'black water' was fatal to caste; now scores of intelligent young Hindus flock to this country to compete with England's sons for the prizes of the civil service or the advantages of a professional training. Twenty years ago an apostate from Hinduism might incur the loss of all that was dear to him—wife and property. Now the law throws its ægis over the convert in both respects. Female education was at no remote day utterly unknown, and regarded as an impossibility; now, as a mighty lever of elevation, and of *dissolution* too, it is becoming a popular movement in the land.

Has not the seed—the seed of varied truth—been planted in the roof of the old temple? How many a breath of wind, how many a little bird, has deposited the seed! Such is *God's* way of working. Let those who know no gauge of progress apart from the baptismal register consider these things; let them take a deeper and a broader view of things, and then, assuredly, they will see reason to exclaim, 'It is the *Lord's* doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!' Nor will they doubt that a beautiful analogy may be traced between the work of God in nature and the forces now at work in India. *Step by step* is the order in each case: 'First the *blade*, then the *ear*, then the *full corn* in the ear.'

CHAPTER IX.

AGGRESSIVE EFFORTS.

'Give a portion to seven, and also to eight . . . In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.' (Eccles. xi. 2, 6.)

THE reader will have noticed that in the last chapter nothing is said of *direct missionary* agencies. We designedly left these out of the account; our object was to delineate the *indirect* forces which are, apart from any other design except the design of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own mind, tending to the dissolution of the hoary system of superstition. The Christian has need to be something of a philosopher in estimating the value of the manifold agencies which are working to this great result. If his vision be so contracted that he can recognise no agency in the grand struggle other than those which he has helped to put in motion, he not only fails to grasp the whole truth of the case, but is in danger, according to his temperament, of either spiritual pride or groundless despondency. The former is true when he attributes to direct missionary agency *alone* the results which God is achieving by varied influences; the other is true when, because he beholds not the number of actual conversions which he desiderates, he argues that nothing is being accomplished, and that all effort is in vain.

We now come to speak of direct aggressive operations. We have seen how the breath of wind and the little bird have

scattered the seeds of varied truth; now we are to see the Church of Christ, in obedience to her divine Lord, going forth to sow the seed of eternal truth in the plains of Hindustan.[1] Here again, *breadth of view* is called for; those persons who can conceive of but *one* form of missionary effort are ill-fitted to judge of the aspects of mission work in India. Those, for instance, who, with shallow powers of interpretation, fasten upon the great injunction to 'preach the Gospel to every creature,' and maintain that the missionary is only fulfilling his vocation when haranguing listening crowds, do grievously err. Surely, if they emphasize the word '*preach*,' they ought not to overlook the expression 'every creature;' and if by what they regard as *preaching*, large and important sections of the population cannot possibly be reached, it must reasonably be inferred that He who gave that injunction meant them to be reached in other ways.

Now, this is the actual state of the case in India. The public proclamation of the Gospel in the bazaars and villages is a work of vital importance; but such is the state of society in India, that, by this method of approach, none but the lower orders of the people can be reached; the whole of the upper classes would be untouched were our efforts to be limited to street-preaching. How, again, are the women of those classes to be reached—the forty millions immured in zenanas? The simple answer is—the missionary cannot reach them at all; and, unless they are approached by female agency, they must remain utterly ostracised as regards Gospel influences. When the great Master likened the heralds of his truth to *fishermen*, he not remotely indicated versatility of resource in their operations: the hooks, the baits, the nets—yea, the periods of fishing—

[1] We trust some other pen will ere long tell the story of mission work amongst the hill tribes of India. Very charming and deeply interesting would that story be; the task, however, which we have set ourselves of dealing with the religious history of the Aryan race, precludes us from entering upon that tempting even if space admitted of it.

must all be regulated by the kind of fish to be caught; and surely the great Exemplar pourtrayed in his own modes of working the idea which He thus indicated. He ever 'went about doing good;' but, oh what beautiful variety appeared in the good which He did, and in His way of doing it!

It will be our endeavour, in this chapter, to present a bird's-eye view of the manifold agencies whereby the Gospel is brought to bear upon the different classes of the population of India. And first of all we speak of

DIRECT PREACHING OPERATIONS.

These, as carried on within the large cities and the rural districts of the country, present very different features. Nothing, perhaps, so forcibly impresses the missionary with the effect of the dissolving agencies already spoken of as the contrast between the tone of the native mind in the cities and villages respectively. This is so strongly marked that he feels himself compelled to adopt two distinct modes of presenting the truth, according to the locality in which he preaches. Out in the country districts—and the more remote from the cities, the more is this the case—he is confronted with a ponderous mass of ignorance and superstition; the people are mad upon their idols, the Brahmans are still worshipped as deities, and caste still exercises its tyrannous sway over the degraded masses. If an alleviating ray of light and liberty of thought appear, it is in connection with some young man of the village who has been educated in a city school, and has, to the dismay of his seniors and the disgust of the Brahmans, carried new thoughts and feelings into his ancestral abode.

As regards the mass of the people, the missionary has to assail the old fortress of Hinduism; he has to expose the folly and wickedness of the gods, to point out the beauties of Christ's character and the matchless superiority of Christianity to the popular system. He is met by arguments which astound and

sadden him; he is told that it is true enough that the gods were what we call vicious and corrupt, but, being gods, they could do what they liked, and were accountable to no one, and that the very *prowess of their lusts* made them objects of veneration to feebler creatures! He is assured that what he says about the wickedness of their worshippers is also true, but he is to bear in mind two considerations—first, that, if the pantheistic view be entertained, then there is no reality in their seeming irregularities; it is all *maya*, 'illusion'—a dream in the mind of the all-pervading Brahmă; secondly, that, if their separate individuality be maintained, then it is still Brahmă who is moving within them, and their words, thoughts, and actions are simply those to which he prompts them.

Such is a type of the arguments which the missionary encounters in his progress through the villages. Very different is it in the cities. Were he to preach in the Presidency cities of India in the strain which he is forced to adopt in the country districts, the chances are that some one or other in his audience would beg him to dismiss such antiquated reasoning, and to deal with matters of deeper import. 'We know all that as well as you can tell us; pray go on to something of greater moment,' would in all probability be resounded in his ears. The idea of defending popular idolatry, of excusing vice, of justifying the gods, of comparing Christ with Krishna, as is done in the villages, rarely, if ever, occurs to the auditors in a city congregation. In this case the arguments are of a totally different character; they are latitudinarian, rationalistic, or infidel, but very rarely do they bear the aspect of a defence of popular Hinduism. This is a *growing* characteristic; year by year it becomes more marked, and, whatever importance we may attach to it, it at least illustrates the disintegrating influences which we have before dwelt upon.

We know nothing more interesting and enjoyable than an itinerating preaching tour. The missionary sets forth with two

or three native catechists; he may make a boat his home, and preach along the banks of the great rivers which intersect the country, or he may take a tent and plunge into the remoter and less accessible regions. Wherever he pitches his tent, he is sure to find, within a radius of three or four miles, from ten to fifteen villages. Day by day he sallies forth with the message of peace on his lips; he takes his station on the steps of some idol temple or, it may be, under some spreading tree; the people flock around and listen to the word of life. It may be that the Gospel has never been proclaimed in that village before; if so, the strange story is heard with a sort of vague wonderment. If it be a place which has been repeatedly visited, the missionary finds tokens of intelligent interest on the part of some of his hearers and of decided animosity on the part of others. Partly from curiosity, partly from desire of information, numbers of persons visit the missionary at his tent, and, not unfreqently, sitting in the tent-door he preaches to a little knot of visitors with more comfort and, perhaps, more effect than when he preached in their villages.

If he be fortunate enough to have his wife with him, it is probable that, whilst he is talking to the men, a little body of timid women gather around his 'better-half' and listen to the 'Old, old story' from her lips; or, it may be, she finds her way into the Zenana of a wealthy native, and delights and edifies the ladies by her discourse.[1]

After every village has been visited, once or oftener, as the case may be, the missionary party remove a few miles further on, again pitch their tent, and pursue the very same course of

[1] Now and then the missionary penetrates a village where no white man has ever been seen. We remember one such an occasion, and the consternation which our visit caused. Before we went out ourselves to preach, the Ayah (native nurse) took our baby into the village; a host of the women rushed out to see the pale little stranger. Its fair complexion almost startled them; they asked the nurse what she put on its face to make it so white; all her protestations that its hue was natural failed to convince them, until, by a *deeper* view of the subject, they discovered that its whole body bore the same complexion.

pleasing and hallowed toil. So the work of itineration advances during the cool months of the year. Generally speaking, the missionary pushes on each year to some new district; he would like to revisit the scenes of his past labours, but he remembers there are thousands of villages where the glad tidings have never once been heard, so he yields to the impulse which points him to the regions beyond. So few are the labourers, and so vast is the field, that the chances are he finds no opportunity of repeating any of his former visits.

Under these circumstances, it is hardly to be expected that the missionary should be able to trace many results of his desultory toil; he simply goes on his way scattering the precious seed; whether it will be his happy lot to come again with joy bringing his sheaves with him, or not, he knows not. He is doing the Master's bidding, and that is enough for him.

Not a few cheering cases have come under our notice in which that saying is true, 'One soweth and another reapeth.' We will mention but three as specimens of the rest.

1. On one occasion we were preaching in a large and important village; the place was noted as the abode of many Brahman families. A congregation of the common people had come around, and were listening with respect and attention to the message when a party of Brahmans appeared on the scene. It was but too evident what their object was—they were bent upon silencing the preacher. He was immediately plied with a host of subtle and captious questions; as he assayed to answer one query, others poured in on every hand; he had but one voice, and that was no match for the many voices raised against him. Long and wearily did he strive for a hearing; it was all in vain; he was hooted, ridiculed, reviled. Then arose the shout of victory, 'Hori bol! Hori bol!' Saddened and humbled at his failure, he turned his face towards his tent; he seemed to have been vanquished, though he knew he was *not*. As he slowly and sadly retired, he perceived steps following him; he

said nothing; at length, when he had got to the outskirts of the village, a man approached him. He recognised the man as one who, during the whole scene of tumult, had stood at his elbow and striven to listen to his message. 'Saheb,' said the speaker, 'I am the goldsmith of this village; I wish to tell you my story. Seven years ago a missionary came to our village as you have done to-day; he preached as you have preached; he was opposed, hooted, reviled as you have been; I listened to his preaching; I heard what I had never heard before. When the missionary retired, he put into my hands two or three tracts. I went to my home; I pondered on what I had heard; I read the tracts, and, bless God! from that day to this I have never bowed down to an idol; here, alone in my own house, I have for seven years back been worshipping the one true and living God.' Need we say that, with joy in our heart and with praise on our lips, we returned to our tent. God had sent us that message of peace to cheer us on our way; but who the missionary was who had seven years before scattered the living seed we know not. The day will declare it.

2. The itinerating missionary betakes himself occasionally to those great idol shrines to which myriads of pilgrims at stated periods resort. Gunga Saugor, the spot at which the Ganges falls into the sea, is one of those noted places of pilgrimage. Many thousands congregate there from all parts of India. On one occasion a missionary was preaching there to a crowd of pilgrims; a man of respectability who, like many others, had gone up to that place with a troubled conscience and with an undefined yearning after peace, stood outside that crowd and listened to the word of life. He hardly knew how to account for the impression made on his mind. He at least knew that a painful sense of restless doubt came over him. The idolatrous services which he had gone to attend had no attraction for him; he shrank from an interview with the missionary; he returned to his distant home. It would appear that his

object was to get rid of the disquiet which the missionary's words had awakened—he wished to forget the whole thing. The effort was fruitless; night and day the strange message haunted him; the desire grew strong for more instruction; he set out for Calcutta; said he, 'I will there seek some one to tell me more about this wondrous story of love.' He knew not a soul in the city; but God knew him and knew the errand on which he had come. The morning after his arrival he was wandering along the streets, not knowing whither he went, but hoping some chance might bring him to some Christian teacher. His steps were directed towards our mission station in that city. It happened that, as he was passing by, a native Christian was reading aloud in his cottage doorway the Bengali Bible; the enquirer paused and listened, then accosted the reader, and told his desire for instruction. He was brought to us; nothing could be more pleasing than the earnest spirit which he evinced. During a short period of instruction, he drank in the word with thankfulness and avidity. He was then admitted into the fold of Christ by baptism, and went on his way rejoicing. Who the preacher was at whose lips he first heard the saving word no one knows.

3. Long, long ago a youth of respectable family was passing along the streets of Calcutta, when his attention was arrested by a crowd of persons around a young missionary.[1] The youth, a little after, continued his journey; but a single seed of truth had fallen into his mind; in a remarkable way, and after long delay, was it to germinate. During the few moments that he listened to the missionary a new *sense of sin* came over him;

[1] In this case we can indicate the preacher; it was the Rev. Alphonse Lacroix, a devoted and able missionary of the London Missionary Society. Some seventeen years ago he went to his rest, after thirty-five years of labour in Bengal. It was our privilege to stand at the bedside of the dying veteran. His bright and cheerful temperament and his unflagging zeal had been to us a delightsome study, and all the more since, as he said, he had witnessed but little fruit of his labours. The above story is only one of several which show that long after he had rested from his labours his works followed him.

he felt that sin was a terrible thing, and that deliverance from it was all-important. No other impression was produced, but that one remained with him; he could not shake it off. As he grew up to man's estate, he embarked in business; he prospered; with prosperity came indifference; he seemed to have lost the impression spoken of. It was *not* so; reverses followed, one misfortune succeeded another, until at length he found himself stripped of almost all that he possessed. In this dark day the old feeling came back with all its force and poignancy; he gave up all business projects, and betook himself to the life of a religious pilgrim. He wandered over the greater part of India, performing his devotions at the most noted Hindu shrines. His one desire was to find relief from the burden of guilt and fear which oppressed him. So several years passed over. In the meantime, Rammohun Roy had founded the Rationalistic society of which mention was made in a previous chapter. As Hinduism had failed to give him peace, he joined the new Society. For ten years he was a consistent Brahmo; for a while his spiritual anxieties seem to have been lulled, but there was no peace. To use his own words, 'there was ever a painful sense of defect in the system which troubled me; that system, pointing to the present and future, said, "do what is just and right and all will be well," but it said naught of the *past*, and the remembrance of past sin kept rushing on my mind; something seemed to say, "without an atonement for past guilt, you perish." Brahmăism provided no atonement, Hinduism did; so I said, the old is better, and again became a Hindu.' Again did he pursue a pilgrim's life. On his last tour he visited Benares, as he had repeatedly done before; he went to every sacred spot in that famous city. When he had completed his round, he retired in the cool of the evening to a garden to meditate. As he reflected, a sense of blank despair seemed to come over him; 'What more,' said he, 'can I do than I have done? and yet there is no peace—still the burden of sin remains.' It

was the darkest hour of his long dark night, but the morn was at hand. 'It appeared,' said he, 'as if an audible voice said to me, "Not in ways like this will peace be found; return to your home."'

Forthwith he bent his steps homeward. Not very long after, on a Sabbath morning, we noticed in our church in Calcutta a stranger of interesting mien: his hair was snowy white, his countenance eager and intelligent, and his eyes sparkled with a sort of inquiring brightness. The prayers ended, he fixed those speaking eyes upon the preacher, and never relaxed his anxious gaze until the sermon was finished. He then followed us to our room, and, bursting into tears, blessed God for the message which had that day fallen on his ears. 'Glory to God!' said he; 'this is what I have been longing to hear for forty years back.' He opened out to us the whole of his strange history. After a conversation of singular interest, he took his departure, taking with him a Bengali Bible. His home was some distance from Calcutta. At the end of two months he returned; his beaming countenance told of inward peace. In those two months he had been feasting upon the Word. The result was to us little short of a miracle; he seemed to have got the book 'at his finger ends.' To our queries he replied by quoting text after text, as if he had been a Bible student all his days. Suffice it to say, his views of doctrine were wonderfully accurate, and his faith evidently earnest and sincere. We then reminded him of his obligation publicly to confess the Saviour in whom he believed. 'I know it,' said he, 'I know it; and I know also what my baptism will involve; now I am respected by a large circle of friends; once baptised, I shall be abhorred and denounced by all—yea, my very children will forsake me—give me two days to reflect and pray.' He again took his leave; bitter was the struggle of those two days; for two nights he slept not; the next morning he took the Bible in his hand and, lifting his eyes to heaven, cried, 'O God! I can

stand it no longer! show me by some passage of Thy word what course I must take.' As he thus prayèd, he let the book fall open in his hand, and the first text his eye lit upon was, 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple' (Luke xiv. 33). He forthwith presented himself as a candidate for baptism, and that very day was admitted into the Church of Christ.

He returned to his home as a Christian; all that he had feared came upon him; friends, servants, children forsook him; Brahmanical curses were poured upon him, and wherever he went the finger of scorn was pointed against him. For weeks and months he endured a great fight of affliction, but there was light and joy within; he returned blessing for cursing, love for hatred. His Hindu persecutors marvelled at his powers of endurance; 'That is the only thing that puzzles me,' said one; '*how can he bear it?*' Thus the tide began to turn; and now, so completely has it turned, that he is respected and honoured by all around; whilst, without let or hindrance, he tells the story of redeeming love.[1] Singularly fresh and fervent is his

[1] A special circumstance materially helped to soften the prejudices of his persecutors. Some of our readers may smile as we relate it. They may, however, rely upon the truth of the story, and perhaps they may think it worth recording. It is a beautiful illustration of the fidelity of a Hindu wife that, though the convert's children, friends, and servants, all forsook him, *she would not*. She was a bigoted idolator, was bitterly opposed to the step he had taken, yet rather than desert him she elected to bear his reproach and share his disabilities. On one occasion, during the dark period of their isolation, she had a serious illness. The husband did all he could for her, but she got worse, and at length she seemed to be dying. 'The thought,' said he, 'flashed upon me in a moment; *ask Jesus to restore her.*' He fell on his knees and cried long and earnestly to heaven for that blessing As he was praying she opened her eyes and began to speak. Her restoration was complete; and strange to say, although the poor woman has not yet embraced Christ, she, without hesitation, avers her conviction that it was prayer to Him which then saved her. We are not concerned to account for this singular occurrence; the woman's recovery may have been simply the result of natural causes. The convert, however, believed (and shall we chide him for so believing?) that the whole thing was of God—that God prompted him to pray, and gave his wife back to him in answer to prayer. Perhaps the sequel might seem to justify his belief. The thought then struck him, 'What prayer has done in this case it may do in others.' Immediately he began to visit sick Hindu friends wherever he

devotion to Christ; well do we remember how, on one occasion, when speaking with him of the topic so dear to him, his eyes filled with tears, and, with faltering accents, he exclaimed, 'O Saheb, the love of Jesus has ravished my heart!'

BIBLE AND TRACT DISTRIBUTION.

It is wonderful what short work a little actual experience sometimes makes of untried theories. We have heard many smart things said against tract distribution. We have seen elaborate articles written to prove the inutility, if not worse, of scattering the Scriptures without 'the living voice' to explain them. We will not deny that, once on a time, we somewhat sympathised with these scruples; if we no longer sympathise with them, it is because the stern logic of facts, as gathered by actual experience, has dissipated the scruples. We have now

could gain admission. He prayed earnestly for their recovery, and, however the fact may be accounted for, it is simply true that several persons were restored to health; in one or two cases the patients had been given up by the doctors as beyond recovery. Of course the Hindus were puzzled; they knew not what to make of the curious phenomenon, but they seem to have reasoned like Gamaliel that, under the circumstances, it was their wisdom and duty to *let the man alone.* Hence the cessation of persecution and the open door of utterance which the convert found. For ourselves we confess we have never been more *at sea* than when plied by intelligent and thoughtful natives on the question of the cessation of miracles in the Church of Christ. Of course we have said the common-place things which are generally said in explanation of this feature; but we have never satisfied the interrogator; and, we are bound to confess, that we have hardly satisfied ourselves either. Two great difficulties have ever faced us, and many of the Hindus are quite shrewd enough to detect and urge them. It is particularly unpleasant when they ask you to point to the line of demarcation—the exact period at which the miraculous element was withdrawn. You cannot say the line was drawn at the death of the last apostle, for few Christians will deny that long afterwards *boná fide* miracles continued to mark the Church. It is more awkward still, when, as has happened to us more than once, the Hindu puts his finger on an utterance of Jesus and says, 'You see here, Mark xvi. 17, Jesus says, *These signs shall follow them that believe.* What can you make of this? surely this must imply the *continuance* of miracles; not apostles only, but converts, should have miraculous power. If we believe the Acts of the Apostles and early Church history, this sign *did* follow as Christ promised;—why is that sign wanting now? are we not justified in demanding this sign?' To our minds this is a *real* difficulty, and one which may well furnish devout and thoughtful minds with a profitable topic of reflection.

no doubt whatever that the agency indicated is one of real and essential value—one which has been signally blest—though, no doubt, discretion and judgment are called for in the use of this agency.

Not a few missionaries employ their moments of leisure in the preparation of books and tracts commending the truth to the various classes of native society. Native colporteurs are employed to go about the country selling these works, and also copies or portions of the sacred scriptures. The missionary always takes a supply of scriptures and tracts for distribution on his preaching excursions. The preaching over, the tracts are given freely, and the scriptures *sold* to those who wish to procure them. The principle of selling the scriptures is a sound and sensible one; it, at least, ensures that the book shall not be destroyed, and most likely is an incentive to its being read. It is some satisfaction to the missionary when he quits a village, not knowing that he may ever be able to visit it again, to leave behind him the truth in 'black and white.' Experience has shown that those silent messengers have repeatedly spoken with saving power to the hearts of their readers; instances are not wanting in which some portion of the Bible, or a little tract, has given rise to a movement of the deepest interest—has indeed been the seed-corn of a bountiful harvest of good.

As in such a matter facts are the best logic, we proceed to mention a few facts, merely premising that they have all either come under our own cognisance, or have occurred to those with whom we are acquainted.

1. More than twenty years ago a missionary on his way to England had the curiosity to take Persia on his route. At that time no missionary operations were allowed in the country, and no Persian could have embraced Christianity without peril to his life.[1] One day the traveller had a short conversation

[1] It is a gratifying circumstance that, quite recently, the Church Missionary Society has been enabled to establish a mission in that country. The visit of the

with a Persian of considerable respectability. It happened that the missionary had in his pocket a copy of the New Testament, translated by the Rev. Henry Martyn forty years before. He put the book into the hands of the native gentleman and passed on his way. The *giver* of the book has never been traced; but the *receiver has.*

The Persian took the book home and read it—read it in solitude and silence for fourteen years. 'The entrance of thy Word giveth light.' Slowly, but clearly and forcibly, did the light shine into his dark mind. He had no teacher but the Word itself, and Him who had inspired it. His faith grew with his light. At length he felt he must break silence. He had learnt from the Book that there was a sacrament of initiation; he longed to be baptised. A branch of the ancient Armenian Church had long existed in Persia; the believer presented himself to the Bishop and begged the sacrament at his hands. The Bishop declined, for, as he said, the step might, as the law stood, be fatal to each of them; but he expressed his readiness to give a letter to the Vicar Apostolic of their Church in Calcutta, provided the Persian chose to seek baptism on neutral ground.

The man immediately quitted his home and country, and made his way to the capital of India. The Vicar Apostolic hesitated. 'Were I,' said he, 'to baptise you, a man of position and influence, the act would be sure to be reported to the Persian authorities, and I should thus compromise my brethren in that country.' Again disappointed, he at last found his way to the Rev. E. C. Stuart, Secretary to the Church Missionary Society in Calcutta. Mr. Stuart was a Persian scholar; he accordingly examined the man as to his knowledge and faith. The result was not a little striking. Here was a person who,

Shah to Europe, a few years ago, had the happy effect of inaugurating an era of toleration unknown before. Already has the Rev. Robert Bruce, the C.M.S. missionary, had the happiness of baptising several converts.

without any human teacher whatever, had derived from the New Testament alone a complete and accurate system of theology. His views on all the cardinal points of doctrine were found to be strictly orthodox and remarkably clear. To every question that was put to him, he replied by some apposite text of scripture. He had begun to study the book as a bigoted Mussulman; he had, unaided by man, finished that study as an orthodox Christian; he had never been taught a single dogma of the faith, but he had gathered them all from the Book! It was our happiness to witness his admission to the fold of Christ at the font of our own Church.

2. Somewhere about the time that the Persian received the New Testament from his unknown friend, an intelligent and earnest young Brahman in a large city in northern India, set himself vigorously to oppose the preaching of the missionaries. He was a devout and conscientious Hindu, and a man of great intellectual power. He persistently confronted the preachers in the streets, or argued with them in their homes; he was animated by the bitterest hostility to Christianity, and honestly resolved to leave no stone unturned to disprove its claims and silence its advocates. But, to his intense disgust, he found himself repeatedly worsted in argument. He at length formed a plan which he was sure must succeed; he would read the Bible from beginning to end, and would carefully note all its errors and discrepancies; he would then publish the result to the world, and so gain the desired triumph. It was hard for him thus to kick against the pricks. As he read, a sense of uneasy suspicion came over him; 'Am I right?' said he. The more he read the more doubtful he became. At length doubt yielded to absolute certainty. 'No,' said he, 'I am *wrong*; I cannot vanquish the book, but the book has vanquished me!' That Brahman is now a devoted and able minister of that gospel which he once laboured to destroy.

3. Not two years ago a Calcutta missionary on a preaching

tour in eastern Bengal, found in a remote village a number of persons avowing their faith in Christ. It was the first time that anything had been heard of them, and the missionary was naturally anxious to trace their history. It was soon traced; he discovered that by some means a Bengali Bible, and a copy of the Prayer-book in that language, had found their way to the village. The reading of these books had resulted in the enlightenment of about forty of the villagers; and these persons were in the habit of meeting together on the Sabbath to read the word of life and to worship God according to the form of sound words which had come to their hands. All this had been going on without the help, or even the knowledge of the Christian Church. Who can deny that *the Book* has a mission of its own?

4. Some years ago a missionary was preaching in the neighbourhood of the Garrow hills, in north-eastern Bengal. He had been fiercely opposed; he found it impossible to gain a hearing; discouraged and saddened he turned to depart; before leaving, however, he distributed a few tracts. Those who received them were about to tear them up, when two or three hillmen who happened to be in the crowd, begged that they might be given to them. They took the tracts to their native hills; the reading of them awakened a spirit of enquiry; ere long a deputation waited on the missionary; they entreated that Christian teachers might be sent amongst them. This was done, and at the present day there is a flourishing Church of several hundreds of members in those hills.

MISSION SCHOOLS.

This is a subject which, more than any other, has given rise to diversity of opinion and eager discussion among the friends of missions. The controversy has related, not to vernacular schools, but to high-class education conducted in the English

language. It has been admitted by all classes that vernacular education on Christian principles is a good thing for the masses, and an important auxiliary to our other missionary agencies. Those who have objected the most strongly to our *English* mission schools have regarded with a friendly eye the extension of vernacular education. The principal ground of their objection to high-class education has been a doubt as to the propriety of expending mission money, and, still more, of employing missionary agents in teaching those secular subjects which enter into a liberal education. As regards the vernacular schools, their curriculum would take in little more than the *three Rs*, and they would be carried on by *native* agents under the general superintendence of the missionaries. Besides, whilst high-class education could only reach the 'upper ten thousand,' Christian vernacular schools might permeate *millions* of minds with the truths of the Gospel.[1]

It cannot be denied that an air of plausibility attaches to

[1] It forms no part of our design to underrate the importance of Christian *vernacular* education. On the contrary we are deeply impressed with a sense of its great value. We rejoice, too, that a society already exists whose sole object is the extension of vernacular teaching. The *Christian Vernacular Education Society* was the outcome of the terrible mutiny of 1857. Christian men argued that, amongst the manifold influences which culminated in that dire calamity, *ignorance* was the most patent and most powerful. They accordingly founded this society; its aim was, by managing vernacular schools and providing sound and wholesome literature for the masses, to remedy the sore evil which had borne such bitter fruit. One interesting feature of this society was that, by its offer thus to bear the burden of vernacular education, it promised materially to relieve existing societies. Thus relieved, they might devote their energies and their funds to more direct Evangelistic operations. It is much to be regretted that this society has not hitherto received that encouragement and support which it so well deserves. It has, however, already opened a mine rich with promise. Instead of establishing independent schools of its own, it has wisely begun by subsidizing existing native village schools. It thus obtains at a trifling cost the virtual control over those heathen schools which it would have found it difficult to supplant; and, by means of native Christian inspectors, it is imparting Christian instruction in all the schools thus aided. When it is borne in mind that, in Bengal and Behar alone there are about 30,000 of those village schools, with about one million of pupils, one cannot but regret that the society's straitened income has only enabled it to extend its influence over some 150 of those schools.

this view. That it should command the suffrages of not a few earnest friends of missions at home is not a matter of surprise. It is just one of those aspects of a great question which lie on the surface, and are therefore readily grasped; but, we are fully convinced, that, underlying that surface are cogent reasons, not only for modifying that view but for setting it aside altogether as an argument against high-class mission schools.

It is true of India, as perhaps of no other country in the world, that *individuality,* not numbers, prevails. No one can study the history of that country without noting the prodigious influence exerted by master minds in past ages. The masses have ever followed their leading. You search in vain for a popular movement which has not had its origin in the brain or heart of some one able or earnest soul. Viewed in this light, the question of the millions *versus* the 'upper ten thousand' assumes a new aspect.

But, as it seems to us, in whatever light the abstract question of high-class mission schools might present itself, the course of events have practically settled our duty in the matter. It is a fact, entirely independent of what we think or desire, that English education must advance. The natives of the middle and upper classes *will have it.* Beside Government schools and colleges, there are hosts of English schools under native management. In all those institutions, Government or native, Christianity has no place. It is also a fact, equally patent, that the effect of English education, on a purely secular basis, is to land its recipients in general scepticism or infidelity. In addition to the testimony previously given on this point we may cite the following declaration of a Hindu periodical—'The Bengal Magizine.' Speaking of a Hindu youth at school, it says,

Up to his passing the entrance examination of the Calcutta University, he remains a Hindu of more or less orthodoxy. When he crosses that Rubicon, Hinduism gradually slackens its grasp of

him. He now tampers with Deism. He loses all faith in the religion of his ancestors, . . . a few become Brahmos; fewer still become Christians; but the vast bulk are left stranded on the shoals of scepticism.

Shall we leave them thus stranded? Shall not the ark of Christ's Church offer an asylum to the shipwrecked voyagers? Our literature and science have wrecked them; shall not our heaven-born faith seek and restore them? That eminently wise and holy prelate, Bishop Cotton, in his last charge to his clergy in Calcutta, said: 'When every English influence of this nineteenth century is brought to bear on the educated natives of Bengal, it will be a shame and scandal to the Church if the highest and purest be wanting. . . . . It should be our aim to purify the whole moral and social atmosphere by faith in the Redeemer, and to surround the educated classes of India with a power of Christian evidence, Christian example, and Christian influence, which at last, we cannot doubt, will be mighty through God to the casting down of strongholds.'

The bishop follows up this remark by a reference to the successful labours of that prince of missionary educators, Dr. Alexander Duff; and he expressed an earnest hope that, ere long, one or other of the two great missionary societies of the Church of England would emulate the example of that noble Scotchman by founding 'an institution in which undergraduates of the university should be educated up to the B.A. standard, under purely Christian influences.'

Not long after, that holy and able man was, with awful suddenness, summoned into his Master's presence, but the desire of his heart was realised. The Cathedral Mission College, now carried on under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society, may be regarded as the legitimate offspring of that desire.[1]

[1] Bishop Cotton preached his last sermon in Calcutta in our own Mission Church in the autumn of 1868. The next day he started on a visitation tour in

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This education, as given in Government and native schools, has been simply secular; as given in mission schools it has been secular *plus* religious teaching. The effect of the secular instruction has been the same in each case—it has been subversive of Hinduism. But here the great contrast of the two lines of teaching has come out. Purely secular teaching has been merely *destructive.* Without in the least intending it, it has dealt a mortal blow to Hinduism; it has left naught but an awful vacuum; the demon of supersti-

Eastern Bengal; he completed his tour and arrived at Kooshtea, whence he intended to proceed by train to Calcutta. He was requested at the former place to consecrate a small burial-ground for the interment of railway officials. After making a solemn address to those present on the shortness and uncertainty of life, he returned to his barge. It was already dark; in crossing the gangway leading from the shore to the vessel the bishop stumbled, fell into the water, and, strange to say, from that moment to this no vestige of him has ever been found. His disappearance was instantaneous. It is difficult to describe the shock occasioned by his death; it may safely be said that, from one end of India to another, from all classes of men, from Christians of all denominations—yea, from Hindus and Mohammedans,—a cry of deep and honest grief arose. In the universal esteem which the good bishop enjoyed, and the traces of good which he has left behind him, thoughtful men can but behold the triumph of faithfulness to sound doctrine when combined with true catholicity of spirit.

tion has been driven out, and is it to be wondered at if some other spirit 'more wicked than the first,' finding the house 'empty, swept and garnished,' should enter in and dwell there? On the other hand, missionary education has been *constructive* as well as destructive; it has thrown out a plank to the ship-wrecked voyagers; it has pointed the benighted, homeless wanderers to a resting-place safe and sure.

Were we to seek for a figure apt and meet to depict the mutual effect of these two modes of education, we might perhaps find it in that peculiar phenomenon of nature called *the Gulf stream.* It is, with respect to the mighty waters through which it flows, comparatively a narrow stream, yet how wondrous are its effects upon navigation and climate! By its aid many a vessel reaches in ease and safety the haven where it would be; and whole populations are benefited, though unconscious, it may be, of the source whence the benefit accrues.

Such is the influence which high-class missionary education exerts over the educated classes of India at the present day. It is not a separate and independent stream, pursuing its course in a parallel line with the other; it really rolls along with, modifies, and impregnates the other; it is a principle of *safety and life* intersecting the principle of destruction and death; eliminate that principle, and who shall say the fearful excesses of atheistic unbelief and immoral license which might ensue? High-class missionary education is the healing branch cast into the bitter waters of Marah; if not thereby turned to actual sweetness, at least their acridity is greatly relieved. Speaking as we do, after nearly twenty years' experience of mission work in India; speaking, moreover, not as an educational, but as a *preaching* missionary, we unhesitatingly avow the conviction that, as the wholesome influence of high-class mission schools can hardly be overrated, so can this agency on no account be dispensed with without extreme peril to the cause of Christ in India.

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If it be asked how far positive results in the way of actual conversions justify this agency, our answer is *twofold*. We reply, first, that to test the value of mission work of any kind in India by this rule is misleading, for the great feature of success is seen, not in present acquisitions to the Church, but in the preparation going on for a great and glorious ingathering of the future. But we say, moreover, that, tried even on this principle, this agency bears a favourable comparison with other branches of missionary enterprise. Speaking of Bengal, it is impossible to think of the goodly company of native Christians now figuring as men of respectability and influence, adorning their profession as ministers of religion, lawyers, doctors, professors, Government officials, and merchants—without thanking God for the *visible* tokens of good which have attended this species of missionary effort; for, be it remembered that, with but very few exceptions, the converts just described are the fruits of high-class missionary education.

In connection with this aspect we cannot but recite a charming little episode which came to our knowledge little more than two years ago. A native Christian merchant in Calcutta conceived a desire to send the gospel to a community of degraded outcastes in Eastern Bengal. He announced his readiness to give a salary of 60*l.* a year to any native brother who would go and settle amongst those people and teach them the way of life. The announcement was hardly made when an applicant for the post appeared. Who was he? It was our happiness to know the man. A more humble, devoted and consistent Christian we never met with. He was a professor in a Missionary College, an M.A. L.L.B. of the Calcutta University, and enjoying an income of some 200*l.* a year! Such was the man who volunteered for the post. If self-sacrifice and earnest love for souls be a mark of true Christianity, a beautiful instance of the kind is surely furnished by this narrative! In this case

both the merchant and the missionary were converts of the institution founded by Dr. Duff.[1]

DOMICILIARY VISITATION.

Year by year thousands of young men pass from the halls of learning to the busy walks of life; the vast majority have no earnest faith at all; they believe in nothing, and are not troubled at that fact. These, for the most part, outwardly conform to Hinduism and pass in society as *orthodox*, although society well knows they are nothing of the kind. Not a few, in matters of diet and in various other ways, openly trangress the laws of caste. Hindu society knows this and winks at it; either its conscience, or its interest, or both, prevent its casting the *first stone*. Educated Hindu society is *hollow to the core*. Viewed in the strictly orthodox light, it merely exists on a compact of mutual hypocrisy.

Some hundreds of educated youths yearly enter upon life with deeper thoughts and graver concern. They feel more or less painfully the need of some object of faith. Some attach themselves to the Brahmă Shamaj; but the greater part, without joining any sect or party, profess to be seeking and serving God according to the light of nature.

[1] We have since learnt that this devoted native missionary had hardly begun his work amongst those rude outcastes when the sudden death of his wife left him in sadness and solitude. No Christian friend was near. Strange to say, a body of Hindu gentlemen, living in the neighbourhood, accorded him both sympathy and active help in the trying hour. They *helped him to bury his dead out of his sight*—a fact which speaks volumes for the influence which, in so short a time, he had gained over them.

In connection with the remedial bearing of missionary education on secular teaching in India, it is worth while mentioning that a considerable proportion of the students in our mission colleges have actually come from Government or native schools. On this point the Rev. S. Dyson, Principal of the Cathedral Mission College, Calcutta, says: 'By far the greater part are ex-students of Government schools, in which the teaching of religion is forbidden, or from native-managed schools, which implicitly follow the principles of Government education.' So that the salutary intersection of purely *secular* teaching by missionary education is a *reality*, and no mere figure of speech.

Within the last few years we have met with not a few avowed *Atheists.* This phase of 'unfaith' is, however, thoroughly un-Indian. There can be little doubt that it is an exotic of Western origin; and it can hardly flourish among the Hindu race.

Of the youths who have been educated in missionary institutions, the great majority may be said to have received a favourable impression of Christianity; of a smaller number it may be predicated 'they are not far from the kingdom of heaven.' Their faith is *almost* that of a Christian. Of a still smaller number it may, without doubt, be testified that they believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and are Christians in all respects *except in open profession.* Only here and there one has courage to embrace the Cross which baptism involves.

Such is the annual outturn of our educational establishments; such is the material out of which the middle and upper strata of native society are being formed. Those young men, as they become heads of families, Government officials, or men of business, cannot but influence other classes with which they are brought in contact; their tone or want of tone, their morality or immorality, are copied and reproduced in an ever-widening circle. Can any one doubt the vast importance of special efforts to reach and influence this portion of the community?

How can it be reached? The public preaching of the gospel herein fails—fails, because the persons comprised in this section of the community will not stop in the streets or bazaars to listen. Special lectures to educated natives have been tried; but, beyond the youths attending school, very few care to come to them. Indeed, with the exception of *house-to-house visitation,* we know of no other efficient mode of bringing the truth to bear upon this interesting class. 'If the mountain will not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain,'

is as trite and sensible a remark as the prophet ever made, and it bears upon the case in hand. A few, a very few, of the educated class feel sufficient concern in the subject of religion to come to the missionary for private intercourse. The vast majority have no such concern; yet they are perfectly willing to be visited, and quite ready to discuss vital truths when they are brought before them in their own homes.

For many years back has it been our privilege and happiness to go to and fro amongst the native gentlemen of Calcutta. Our experience has been fairly encouraging; and this kind of effort has, at least, given us an insight into their moral and religious standing, such as could hardly have been attained in any other way. As a rule, we have ever found them courteous and cordial. Discretion, however, is called for in the mode of approach. Those visits should be made in an informal and quiet way. If the missionary, wishing to show respect to the native gentleman, drive up to his door and send up his card by the servant, he will be received with politeness once or twice; but, the chances are, the next time he calls the servant has half-a-dozen good excuses ready—'the Baboo is out, or he is sleeping, or bathing, or eating'—and so an interview is declined. Now, the truth of the matter is, the Baboo has no objection to see the missionary, but his formal visits have been observed by the neighbours and talked of by the servants, and this involves an inconvenience which he shrinks from.

Our method of approach has been more simple. We quietly saunter along in the early morning or cool of the evening. By-and-by we come upon two or three native gentlemen sitting in a verandah, smoking the inevitable *hookah*. We pause, salute the party, exchange a few common-place remarks, pat the children on the head, if there happen to be any. The head Baboo will offer a seat. Thus 'the ice is broken;' all the rest follows naturally enough. If your native friends know you to be a missionary they know what you have come for; in any

case you soon find an opportunity for introducing the *great topic.* It is likely that, during the conversation, the little party is increased by new-comers; thus have we repeatedly found ourselves with quite a respectable congregation of intelligent native gentlemen, and have rejoiced in the opportunity of preaching from an arm-chair or a bench a sermon which those persons would not have listened to under any other circumstances.

In those interviews we have invariably used the *vernacular.* There can be little doubt that, although the native gentlemen are more or less familiar with the English language, the shortest way to their hearts is by their *mother-tongue*; and the more earnest they are, the more do they prefer that medium of communication. Still, the fact of their familiarity with English opens out an important sphere of usefulness to other than vernacular scholars.

Of course the character of the conversation depends materially upon the particular views represented by your auditors. Of two things you may be pretty well assured; *first*, no serious attempt will be made to defend *old Hinduism*; and, *secondly*, nothing disrespectful will be said of Christ. The idea of defending the old system and the idea of abusing Christ seem alike to have been surrendered. You may find a distinction drawn between Christ and Christianity; every one will admit that against Christ nothing can be said, but some may question the claims of Christianity, and they do this on the supposition that popular Christianity is not altogether the system which Christ founded.

Amongst the many hopeful features which mark the class of which we are speaking surely this general respect for Christ is not the least important. As illustrating this point we may state that for, say, fifteen years back, we have never heard a word of disrespect towards Christ proceed out of the mouth of an educated native. We have heard, on the contrary, hundreds

of times, expressions of the deepest admiration, often amounting to unfeigned veneration, for that holy Being.

We would lay stress upon this feature as indicative of the actual drift of native scepticism and infidelity. 'Is infidelity better than idolatry?' is a query which has repeatedly fallen on our ear; and we are sure that those who have put the question were at the time thinking of those alarming phases of European unbelief with which they were but too familiar. We are, however, convinced that the two things are *not* the same, but *very different.* The distinction between European and Indian unbelief should be borne in mind. In both cases, no doubt, it is a *consumption*; but in Europe it is a consumption of the *lungs*, a vital part—it bears upon the very foundations of truth. In India it is a suppuration of an old cancerous tumour, which in the long run would have killed the patient; *there* it bears upon a monstrous system of error and superstition. Were we to seek an actual parallel to Indian scepticism, we should find it, not in modern European unbelief, but in that break-up of old faiths which in the Roman Empire anticipated and facilitated the early triumphs of Christianity. That movement originated with the educated classes, but it did not stop with them. It has been truly said, 'They outwardly conformed to the rites which they inwardly despised.' Thus the work of dissolution preceded the assault of Christianity, and what the glorious upshot was we all know.

It may interest the reader if we give a little sketch of a morning's talk with a party of Baboos. He will thus get some idea of the argumentative line which they most frequently adopt, of the difficulties and objections which they urge; and he will also see the kind of answers which we have found the most *telling* in their case. It will be seen that we attach great value to the argument from *analogy*. Indeed, in dealing with persons of the class spoken of—persons who, while they acknowledge a God of nature with perfect attributes, repudiate the

idea of revelation—this is the only line of argument which is simply unanswerable. Every Indian missionary should not only read, but 'mark, learn, and inwardly digest,' the inimitable work of Bishop Butler. Here, then, are a few of the queries which from time to time are put to us.

Query 1. 'How can you reconcile the Biblical account of the fall of man and the introduction of moral and physical evil with the absolute perfections of the Deity? If God be infinitely *good* and at the same time infinitely *powerful*, would he have suffered the entrance of evil into his Universe?'

Answer. 'But, my friend, you believe equally with myself that God is infinitely good and powerful; yet as you look around do you not see a thousand forms of moral and physical evil existing? The question is, how do *you* reconcile this admitted fact with the infinite perfections of the Deity?'

Query 2. 'Well, the truth is, I cannot easily do that; but what I object to in the scriptural account is, that God is represented as placing his creatures in circumstances of *temptation*, exposing them to inducements to go wrong? Is this probable and credible?'

Answer. 'The Bible simply shows that God placed man in a state of *probation*, not that he put before him inducements to evil. But again I must ask you to look at the existing state of things. You believe in a moral Governor of the Universe; you object to the Bible because it represents Him as placing man originally in a state of temptation. But can you help seeing that man—all men—persons of every class and position, are *now* subject to temptation, and that despite themselves? Do we not find ourselves, from the cradle to the tomb, surrounded with what you call inducements to go wrong, and that, without constant effort to vanquish these temptations, we *must* go wrong? How have we come into our present perilous position? Our chief peril, as you will agree, arises out of our natural constitution—our passions and propensions. How have we got these

dangerous tendencies? You know how the *Bible* accounts for them, but how do *you* account for them?'

Query 3. 'Well, I admit it is not easy to account for them at all; but the Bible not only speaks of temptation, but a great *Tempter*—a powerful agent of evil, who, with myriads of subordinate agents, has for thousands of years been successfully waging war against the Deity, and corrupting mankind. Surely the existence of Satan utterly clashes with our innate notions of God as almighty and all-holy. Why did he not prevent the origin of Satan, or destroy him at once?'

Answer. 'Are there no *human* devils in the world—no monsters of vice and wickedness—no tempters and seducers, luring the innocent and unsuspecting into the paths of corruption and ruin? You know there are; you know the world is full of such agents of evil; you know, too, that they seem to be fighting against God all too successfully; and yet God neither prevented their origin nor does He cut them off! They for the most part work out their evil purposes just as the Bible represents Satan and his angels as doing. What, then, are we to say to all these things? At least you must see that your argument that the Bible cannot have come from God because of its account of temptation, of the introduction of evil, and of the existence of agents of evil, entirely falls to the ground; for the very things you object to exist under the moral and natural government of God in the Universe. Surely it is your wisdom and mine to bow in silence in all such matters, and, admitting our ignorance, cry "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"'

Query 4. 'But now I have one question to ask you. The Bible teaches, and you believe, that Christianity is a divine and sovereign remedy—indeed, the *only* remedy, for man's moral woes. I ask you, if that were so, is it not morally certain that the Almighty would have revealed that remedy to *all* his creatures? Seeing all mankind equally needed the boon and were perishing for want of it, would he, as in this country, have

kept millions of his children for thousands of years in utter ignorance of the only way of salvation? At least we must believe that God is just and impartial.'

Answer. 'I agree with you we must so believe; but surely many things in nature *seem* as much at variance with this belief as is the particular objection you urge. Do we find God deals exactly alike with all nations? Do we not see some raised to the highest pitch of moral, social, and material eminence, whilst others again have been left for long ages to grovel in ignorance and barbarism? Take next the case of the physical ailments to which man is heir. We may assume that there is somewhere in nature a remedy for every form of human disease. God knows where those remedies are; He knows, too, how many millions of his creatures are perishing for want of them; why does he not reveal them at once and to all men? You cannot tell *why*, any more than I can tell why he did not at once reveal to all nations his own remedy for man's moral woes. But both you and I can see one thing: we see that just as, in the providence of God, remedies for physical ailments are being gradually propagated among the human family, in the very same way is Christianity spreading itself through the earth. Your objection therefore against it for coming to India so late is seen to have no practical force at all; and, remember, you don't refuse to enjoy the benefits our *medical science* has brought you because your forefathers were strangers to this boon.'

Query 5. 'I can afford to waive that point; but a most formidable objection lies against the very principle of the Christian scheme. That principle is, that the innocent suffers for the guilty, the just for the unjust! Surely the moral sense which God has given us, no less than our reason and common sense, recoils from such an idea.'

Answer. 'However you may recoil from the idea, you cannot get rid of the *fact*. The thing itself stares you in the face wherever you look. Can you help seeing that the constitution

of nature, and the relation of man to man, are such, that ten thousand instances daily occur of the innocent suffering for the guilty? Is there one here present who has not at some time or other suffered for the faults of others? Are there no innocent women and children suffering for the vices of profligate husbands and fathers? Are there not myriads of innocent subjects suffering for the rapacity and cruelty of tyrannical sovereigns? Why, the world, which you admit to be under the moral and natural government of God, abounds with illustrations of the principle you object against in Christianity. But do you not perceive that your objection bears with a thousandfold more force against the course of nature than against Christianity? Here in the world around us the innocent are *compelled* to suffer for the guilty—they have no option, stern necessity involves this. Christianity, on the other hand, represents the innocent Sufferer as a *volunteer* in the matter—it was His *choice* to suffer. And then, *who* was the Sufferer? Why, it is a case, not of a mere man suffering for his fellow-men, but of *God himself suffering for his guilty creatures!* Then, look at the *effects* of this. You see thousands of innocent persons suffering for the guilty without a solitary good result accruing therefrom; all is evil; but look at the glorious result in the *other* case: by the vicarious sufferings of One "the free gift comes upon all men to justification of life." And then, lastly, do not forget that, for decades of centuries, your forefathers held the very doctrine you find fault with in Christianity: atonement, substitution and vicarious suffering were, as you know, essential elements in their system. How did they get these notions? If they reasoned them out for themselves, then they would seem not to be so unreasonable as you say they are; if they did *not* reason them out, whence did they derive them? Was it not, think you, from some primeval Revelation?'

These are but a few specimens of the kind of topics discussed in those interviews. Many others might be mentioned; for

instance,—the destruction of the Canaanites as enjoined by God upon the Israelites, and the declaration that 'the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation,' are frequently adduced as militating against the perfections of God's character. The reader will at once see what a conclusive reply to these points also may be drawn from the analogy of nature. This is a style of argument which, so to speak, 'shuts up' the objectors; it, at least, shows them that their objections are *pointless* as regards the Bible and Christianity. It may have, and we trust has, other and more wholesome effects; it teaches a spirit of humility and self-distrust, teaches them that Reason is by no means an infallible guide, that she may lead them astray; and, finally, the very fact that precisely similar difficulties occur in the Christian scheme to those which are seen to exist in Nature, suggests the enquiry, whether, after all, each may not have the same Author.[1]

Nothing is more remarkable than the endless shades of opinion and sentiment which are met with among the class of which we are speaking. Ranging upwards from avowed Atheism to secret, but entire, belief in Christianity, you meet with every possible variety of thought and feeling. Not a few have, besides a respect for Christianity, a strong conviction of its ultimate triumph in India. We have now before us the very words of one who is a type of this class. He is an editor of a native paper conducted in the English language. He simply gives expression to what very many of his class feel and believe when he says—

[1] Sometimes one is almost startled by unlooked-for objections. We remember on one occasion a native gentleman laying his finger on the words which God put into the mouth of Samuel (1 Sam. xvi. 2), and asking how we reconciled that with absolute truthfulness. We were a little surprised at the question, though it was not very difficult to answer it. On another occasion an intelligent young man brought to us his New Testament, and pointed out the seeming discrepance between John's account of the *hour of Christ's death* and the account given by the other Evangelists. These instances, at least, testify that the Bible is *read* by men of this class, and with some attention too. Surely this is in itself a feature of hope.

Though not a baptised Christian, my honest conviction is that the time must come when the whole of the Indian peninsula will be Christianised, and that neither Brahmanism nor Rationalism will be able to arrest the progress of Christianity.

One day a native gentleman perfectly astounded us by a running series of quotations from the Bible; he seemed to have committed considerable portions of the book to memory. 'And how is it,' said we, 'as you have got so far, that you have not gone further?' 'Wait a while,' said he; 'we shall all be Christians by-and-by.'

Another day a gentleman called us into his house, quietly beckoned us to follow him, and then led us on to the roof, and there, where no eye but God's could see us, he declared that he had long been enquiring into the claims of Christianity, 'and,' said he, 'no more doubt remains on my mind; I believe in Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world—by-and-by I must be baptised.' Alas! he has not yet taken that step. We are acquainted with others of his type. One of these, a man of wealth and position, has, in heart, embraced the whole body of Christian doctrine; daily he gathers his children around him and reads with them the Book of God; his wife, too, is a believer. But he also shrinks from baptism. Not more than a stone's throw from our home lived a native magistrate; he died three years ago. For long years before his death was he a Christian in heart. He was never baptised, but he established a religious service in his house; he induced his native friends to join him every week in the study of the Bible and prayer. Strange to say, on Good Fridays this little community commemorated the death of Christ in a ceremony bearing some resemblance to the Lord's Supper. Another of those secret believers came to us and earnestly begged that we would allow him to slip into the church and join us at the Holy Communion! He shrank from the *first* sacrament, for that would have in-

volved publicity and *the Cross*, but he ardently longed to partake of the *second*.

Well, good reader, if only you knew what a terrible cross a respectable convert has to take up, you would pity more than censure, and pray for more than condemn, those weak brethren. It is, at least, something to rejoice over, that not a few educated Hindus feel the force of the truth. In a lower degree than a baptised confessor they witness to the truth and help it onward. This growing faith and knowledge are things which will abide; the conventional and social obstacles to an open confession are accidents which will pass away—*are passing away*. If in the condition of the educated natives generally there is much that is ominous and cloudy, it needs not a very sanguine mind to detect a *silver lining* to that cloud.

ZENANA TEACHING.

This is the last developed, though certainly not the least important, of our mission agencies; indeed, it is hardly possible to exaggerate its importance at the present time. It seems to be a natural law of society that neglected or injured classes in the long run avenge themselves on society at large. The case of the neglected and oppressed women of India is no exception to this rule. Their social degradation in past ages reacted in a corresponding degradation of the other sex; and now, the chief impediment to the elevation and advancement of the men is found in the ignorance and bigotry of the women.

In a variety of ways do the women act as a drag upon the wheels of progress. Native gentlemen admit and bewail the fact, but in no respect is their obstructive influence more powerfully felt than in the matter of religion. Religion has ever been the domain of woman's strength in India. She may have been a cipher in other things, but the right of control in this respect has ever been conceded to her in the domestic circle. The account of this is easy and natural enough. The religious

instinct, which is so marked a feature in the *men* of India, exists in an intensified degree in the *women*; religion is a leading topic of their thoughts, the main employment of their lives. Their exclusion from society, and their enforced ignorance of general subjects, naturally lead them to concentrate the affections of their souls on this hallowed topic. The men have ever yielded the palm of superior devotion to the weaker sex; the women firmly grasp and resolutely exercise the control thus ceded to them. The men may smile at the bigotry and superstition of the women, but they submit to them nevertheless. Sincerity and enthusiasm are stronger than speculative knowledge; the men are enlightened, but undecided and insincere; the women are ignorant, but intensely earnest and devout, and so of course they carry the day. It may without doubt be averred that, at the present time, the women of India are the mainstay of Hinduism. The influence of the priests is rapidly waning; the educated men either despise them or come to an amicable understanding with them, in which both parties play the hypocrite. But no such arrangement can break the spell of woman's influence; she is in earnest about her religion, false though it be, and will remain so until she is educated and enlightened.

Perhaps there is hardly a missionary in India who has not had cause to lament the consequences of their influence. How many a young man has fought his way through doubts and fears to the truth; has at length embraced the truth in his heart; has got, as it were, one foot within the kingdom, and has then receded, perhaps never more to return! We could tell of a series of such cases. And what has been the deterring, diverting cause? It has been *woman's influence.* Yes, many such a believer has been prepared to brave the reproach and hatred of friends and acquaintances, has been ready to sacrifice social standing and material advantages; but the tears and entreaties, the beseeching endearments of an agonised mother or

sister, he could not withstand; conscience has succumbed to natural affection. We have ourselves witnessed more than once the harrowing spectacle which we here indicate; and, as we have watched the scene of anguish, beheld the flowing tears, and listened to the frantic appeals of those who hung about the convert's neck—we confess it—tears have risen to our eyes, we have shared the common distress; yea, and a half-guilty feeling has come over us, as being in some sense the *cause* of such bitter misery. But then the Master's words have relieved us, teaching as they do the practical effect of the conflict of truth with error, light with darkness: 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword' (Matt. x. 34).

But surely all this shows us the immense, the overwhelming importance of the education of India's daughters. If on philanthropic grounds alone this is called for, on *evangelistic* grounds it is seen to be absolutely *essential*—essential to the progress of the truth in India. It is impossible to estimate the extent to which our other missionary agencies depend upon the advancement of female education. It is a case in which there are two sides to the picture; *now* the ignorant devotion of the women constitutes a formidable obstacle in our way, but it is easy to comprehend that the same intensity of devotion, if enlightened and sanctified, would become a powerful auxiliary to the spread of the truth.

Of the many tokens of good in India, none is more encouraging and more remarkable than the present facilities for teaching the women. A quarter of a century ago the difficulties in the way seemed to be all but insuperable. The education of women was then looked upon, not only as useless, but as pernicious and perilous. Domestic calamities would be sure to avenge such a daring innovation; at the very least the women themselves would be spoilt; 'they were bad enough *without* education, what would they be *with* it?' Such was the logic of that day. Missionaries did what they could to break down this

prejudice; they did something in *their* way; but God has done more in other ways. Again are we compelled to note the beneficial effects of English education; one of its most important collateral consequences has been the gradual *melting away* of that old stupid prejudice. It may safely be averred that the English education of the men has made the education of the women a possibility; had not the minds of the men been expanded by contact with western science and literature, we might have knocked in vain at the doors of the Zenanas. As it is, not only have multitudes of educated natives come to see that it is a great *wrong* to keep their women in ignorance, but that it is a positive *inconvenience.* So long as they were ill-taught themselves they got on very well with untaught wives; but a liberal education has awakened within them a desire for more intelligence in their partners; accordingly in the large cities of India the Zenanas are being thrown open and European and American ladies are cordially invited to teach the secluded inmates.

Several societies are already at work in this interesting field. Happily, with scarcely an exception, Christian teaching constitutes an essential feature of the instruction given. It is a noteworthy fact that most native gentlemen feel that religion in some way or other should enter into the teaching of their women; they might prefer a *colourless* type of religion to distinctive Christian teaching, but they accept this in preference to a purely secular system of education.

This agency is of too recent an origin to justify a demand for striking results; indeed, as regards actual baptisms it would neither be surprising nor very discouraging if we had none to speak of. It must be borne in mind that serious as are the obstacles to an open confession of faith in the case of a man, they are vastly greater in the case of a *woman.* How is she to get baptism? No missionary can penetrate the recesses of the Zenana; she must then come to the missionary; she must quit

her life-long seclusion and come into the outer world, and *accept all the consequences.* And what are these? Why, the very act involves the loss of home, husband, and children; she must cast herself on the charity of strangers and foreigners, and what her future may be she knows not! Surely it is no marvel if few are found to brave such a prospect. Leaving such direct results altogether out of view, we may well afford to rejoice in the present and hope for the future. The *opening door* is in itself a prodigious advantage, and if only the daughters of Christendom enter into it with a right spirit and in sufficient numbers a glorious harvest is in store.

Already a few grateful sheaves have been gathered in. It has been our happiness to baptise several Hindu ladies as the result of Zenana teaching. The case of the first of these may be regarded as typical of the rest. She lived with her husband in Calcutta, and was about seventeen years of age when a devoted agent of 'The Indian Normal School and Instruction Society' began to visit her. When she had learned to read, her teacher supplied her with a copy of the Bengali Bible. She read the book with curiosity and pleasure; her husband also showed an interest in listening to some of the touching stories of that holy book. For some time no higher feeling than amusement actuated either; but, ere long, the wife began to have deeper thoughts and impressions; the character of Jesus, and the strange story of his love, took hold of her affections; she believed with the heart and then made confession with her mouth; she told her husband of her convictions. The man was taken aback at the revelation: it was one thing to read the Bible as a story book, quite a different thing to *believe* it; he never meant to believe it himself, and he was resolved his wife should not do so either. From that day did his tone change towards her; harshness and severity—yea, cruel stripes, took the place of tenderness and affection. It was perilous to read the book in the daytime, so the poor

woman economised the midnight hours, and whilst her husband slept, she would quietly light her lamp and pore over the hidden treasure. So three years passed over; but all this while she felt an earnest desire for baptism. Her Christian friend and teacher judiciously refrained from advising any precipitate action in the matter; it was felt to be best to let the woman's own conscience decide her conduct in this respect. The hour of decision came; she had long counted the cost, she had repeatedly prayed for guidance. At length, one morning, she left her home, came to us, and begged us to administer to her the holy rite. She had scarcely reached our abode when her husband with a party of his friends came to demand her surrender. The woman came forward, and in a meek and loving spirit assured her lord that the step which she had taken was her own act entirely. 'I have not left you,' said she, 'and I will not leave you; my love to you is unchanged, and I will love and serve you until death; only let me be baptised, and I will return with you immediately.'

In vain she pleaded; curses were poured out upon her; then followed an attempt to seize her by violence and drag her away. At this point only did we interfere; we observed that she was free to go as she came, but must not be coerced. The rest is soon told; then and there was she renounced, and that for ever. She has never since crossed the threshold of her home, and another now fills the place she once occupied.

There is, however, a bright streak in the dark picture; for six years has this interesting convert walked worthy of her profession, and for the greater part of that time has she been employed as a teacher of her benighted sisters in Calcutta. She is still labouring in that capacity.

Peculiarly solemn and touching were the circumstances under which we baptised another. She was a Hindu widow about thirty years of age. This lady had long been a believer, but had lacked courage to make a public avowal of her faith. The

hand of God decided the matter for her. A serious disorder developed itself in her system. The only remedy was a surgical operation. This operation was of such a critical nature that, for the sufferer the chances between life and death were about equal. She elected to accept the risk, but she caused herself previously to be removed to the abode of her Christian friends. There we were summoned to her bedside; with perfect calmness and clearness she declared the grounds of her faith, and then received the holy ordinance of initiation. We could not but feel solemnised at the reflection that, in a painfully literal sense, we were probably baptising her for the dead. By God's mercy the operation was successfully performed, and she has since been employed as a Zenana teacher.

Another case with which we were brought in contact was one of an exciting, almost *heroic*, interest. On a tour of school inspection we arrived one afternoon at Midnapore, a town some 70 miles distant from Calcutta. Just before our arrival a native lady had presented herself before the clergyman of the station as a candidate for baptism. The Rev. M. C. Proby was the minister of the *English* community at that place, and knew very little of the vernacular. He begged us to help him in this unlooked-for emergency. We soon discovered the history of the case. Some months before, a native Christian woman, a member of our own congregation in Calcutta, had gone to take charge of a girls' school at Midnapore. This woman had, of her own accord, begun to visit several of the neighbouring Zenanas; she had thus taught the lady we are speaking of to read. The reading of the Gospels and conversation with her Christian teacher impressed the pupil; the upshot was her visit to the clergyman and her demand for baptism.

We tarried two or three days at the place and gave the woman special instruction preparatory to her baptism. The day of our departure witnessed a strange scene of violence and riot. The husband and friends of the woman, accompanied

by about two hundred persons, assaulted the parsonage, demanding the surrender of the woman. The clergyman, with, perhaps, more courage than discretion, ventured to confront the excited crowd. He was fiercely assailed, and had to seek refuge in his house wounded and bleeding. As he entered the house a host of angry men rushed in along with him; their one object was to seize and carry off the lady. But they had reckoned without their host, or rather, their *hostess*. The clergyman had a wife, and she was a plucky Irishwoman; she proved herself equal to the occasion; she flung her arms around her Indian sister, the Hindu lady grasped her; thus the two ladies were locked together as one. It was an awkward predicament for the assailants; they did not want the white lady; besides, unpleasant consequences would be sure to follow her abduction, so they tugged away at the native lady; the more they tugged the closer the two held to each other. In such a matter delay is everything. In the meantime the police arrived and the woman was released.

Her friends next took out a writ of *Habeas Corpus*, and the woman was cited into the Judge's Court. She there witnessed a good confession, and it was decided that she was free to act upon her convictions. A day or two after she was baptised by Mr. Proby. Subsequently she was brought down to Calcutta. In the Normal school of the society already referred to she has been trained for a Zenana teacher, and is now engaged as such at Lucknow. 'It is a great joy,' wrote she to us, 'to do the Lord's work.'

In her isolation and banishment she had a special ray of comfort. She had two children, the eldest was taken from her, and she may never see him again. The youngest was an infant, this she retained. The child lived to be three years old and then sickened and died. Some months ago we received the touching story of her loss from her own pen. Her simple plaintive tale is but the cry of many another bereaved heart,

but her circumstances and condition give to it especial force and pathos. She writes:—

Oh, sir, you have heard of the terrible affliction which has befallen me. The Lord, my merciful God, has snatched from me the one precious child which was my stay and support in my earthly pilgrimage. Alas! how wearisome now does my journey seem! how destitute I feel myself to be! I did not so much bewail my banishment from home and from all that were dear to me, because God gave me this one precious jewel as my consolation. Oh, how very, very dear he was to me! and how he showed his love to God! When dying he said, 'Mother dear, do repeat the hymn Ohē klantho.'[1] Oh, when shall I again listen to that sweet word 'Mother'? never, never, again in this world! Repeatedly in his sleep he would cry out, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven!' Oh! never have I beheld a child like that; he was dearer to me than my own soul. Do pray for me! From your sorrowing sister in Christ Jesus, . . .

If it be true that 'a touch of nature makes us all akin,' then, perhaps, more than one Christian reader may not only sympathise with, but breathe a prayer to heaven for, this 'sorrowing sister.'

It is no secret that, besides the little company of believing women who have avowed their faith by baptism, there are numbers who have embraced Christ in their hearts. Yes, many a gentle, timid spirit in the seclusion of her domestic prison is firmly clinging to the Cross for peace and safety; many a trembling believer is at this moment enduring great searchings of heart; on the one hand are the tender pleadings of natural affection, on the other is the stern voice of conscience. 'Confess Christ openly,' says the latter, 'and take up your cross!' 'I long to do it,' is the tremulous reply, 'but oh, *such a cross!* may I not wait, and hope, and work? may I not first try to enlighten and save those who are so dear to me, and hope for the

[1] A Bengali version of 'Art thou weary? art thou languid?'

future?' And what shall we say? It is easy to say, 'Let the dead bury their dead;' but the question is, what *ought* we to say in a matter of this peculiar and delicate nature? Should we advise every believing wife and mother at once to come out for baptism, knowing all that this step involves? The question has repeatedly come before us in a practical shape; devoted Zenana teachers have asked for counsel in cases of the kind described. We trust we have not done wrong in saying, 'Urge no woman to quit her home; take care that she shall know what the Master says, but leave the *onus* of decision with herself.' It is at least a matter of singular satisfaction to know that every believing inmate of a Zenana has her circle of influence. Instead of upholding the family shrine with its endless round of senseless observances, instead of instilling into the minds of the children the silly and pernicious stories of the gods, she becomes a centre of light and an important auxiliary to the dissolving process whereby the old system is being assailed. It is no strange thing for such a believing, loving wife to find in her liberal-minded husband a willing learner.

Some years ago one such a husband in Calcutta witnessed a scene of touching import. His wife was dying; she had long been a believer. He was sitting by her bedside when she asked him to open a drawer and bring to her the book which had long been her counsellor and consolation. She received the volume from his hands, and then, devoutly placing it on her head, blessed God for that priceless treasure. Anon, she requested the husband to bring her some water. He knew not her object but fulfilled her request. Then followed a scene which would have melted any Christian heart, and which even the Hindu husband beheld with wondering awe. The dying woman took the vessel of water in her hand, then looking to heaven asked a blessing on the act she was going to perform, and craved forgiveness if she were doing wrong. She then poured the water on her own head, repeating the names of the

blessed Trinity as she did so. Not long after she passed away. That baptism found no entry in any church register below; but shall we not believe that it was duly registered in the archives of the 'general assembly and Church of the first born in heaven,' and that shouts of welcome greeted the arrival of that ransomed spirit in the heavenly courts?

CHAPTER X.

THE NATIVE CHURCH.

'Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.'—John x. 16.

A FULL and particular account of the origin and development of the native Church in the several provinces of India would take us far beyond the compass of our present design. Our object is rather to speak of accomplished facts than to delineate the mode of their accomplishment.[1]

A glance at certain salient points is all we can adventure as to the past history of the Church. We may candidly acknowledge, with some humiliation to ourselves, that (as regards *protestant* missions) to the Danes belongs the honour of first bringing the Gospel to bear upon the natives of India. In 1706, with the sanction and support of the King of Denmark, two young Danish missionaries commenced the Evangelical assault upon Hinduism at Tranquebar, a Danish settlement. Five years before, the 'Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts' had been founded in England by a Royal Charter. To the credit of that venerable society be it recorded that, in a time of emergency, it generously accorded help to the Danish missionaries by a

[1] The story of the *building up* of the present native Church is in itself a most copious subject. It is well told in *The History of Protestant Missions in India*, by the Rev. M. A. Sherring M.A., LL.B., an able and devoted missionary of the London Missionary Society. This interesting work appeared only a few months ago; and we thankfully acknowledge our obligation to Mr. Sherring for many of the facts which appear in our present chapter.

pecuniary contribution to their treasury and by a supply of useful books for their library.

Subsequently the 'Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge' opened a special fund in England for the aid of the Danish Mission. It is recorded that 'nothing could be more gratifying than the liberality of the English who distinguished themselves on this occasion. People of all ranks, nobility and clergy, ladies and gentlemen, citizens and merchants, contributed to a large amount, some without wishing it to be known.' In the absence of *direct* missionary enterprise it is gratifying to note this early budding of missionary interest in England. It continued to grow. Some years later we find the Christian Knowledge Society, in concert with the Archbishop of Canterbury, devising fresh means of assistance for the Danish Mission. Three young missionaries of that nation before starting for India visited England; they had an audience of the king (George I.), who gave them a contribution from his privy purse; the Princess Charlotte Amelia also gave them money, and promised that her prayers should follow them. Sermons were preached and collections made in the German Chapel Royal and the Savoy Church; a free passage was given them in a British ship of war, and they left England laden with presents, and carrying from the Archbishop of Canterbury a pastoral letter to Schultze, the senior missionary at Tranquebar.

In 1726 Schultze established a mission in Madras, and in 1729 baptised in that city as many as 140 persons. The Christian Knowledge Society, which had all along aided the Danish Mission, in 1730 sent out its first missionary to Madras. Ultimately that Society accepted the entire responsibility and control of the Madras Mission. In 1736, just ten years after the commencement of the mission, the converts numbered 415 souls.

In the meantime the Rajah of Tanjore had welcomed the Danish missionaries and sanctioned the preaching of the Gospel

throughout his dominions. At the date last mentioned a number of congregations existed in that kingdom, representing a body of 1,140 members. The Tranquebar congregations comprised 1,189 native Christians. Of these latter 636 were communicants. During the next ten years these two missions were augmented by well-nigh 4,000 baptisms.

Thus in Southern India considerably more than a century ago vigorous and prosperous missionary operations were carried on. If we are humbled to think how little we, as a nation, had to do with these operations, we can at least rejoice at the forwardness and success of others in that promising field.

The arrival in 1750 of Christian Frederick Schwartz forms an important epoch in the history of missions in Southern India. The *political* influence exercised by this simple, but devoted and able missionary, is in itself a remarkable phenomenon. He lived and acted in troublous times; and it may be safely asserted that, in respect of *moral power*, he was in those times absolutely without a rival. Had not his heart been well established in grace, his head might have been turned by the greatness which was thrust upon him; but, in truth, the strength of his heart accounted for the strength of his character and the extent of his influence. In the midst of the crooked, treacherous policy and bloody strifes of that period, Schwartz stands out in bold relief as a pillar of righteousness and truth. The contending parties hated and distrusted each other, but all revered and trusted the humble, God-fearing, self-denying missionary. Each party in turn sought his counsel and aid; he was the only man whose word was beyond doubt, whose character was above suspicion. 'Padre,' said the Rajah of Tanjore, 'I have confidence in you, because you are indifferent to money.' When the Government of Madras desired to come to terms with the formidable Hyder Ali, that bold warrior refused to receive a civilian negotiator. 'Let them send me,' said he, 'the *Christian* (meaning Schwartz); he will not deceive me.' The Government

gladly availed itself of the services of Schwartz in that difficult undertaking. The Rajah of Tanjore on his death-bed begged the missionary to accept the guardianship of his adopted son and heir. At the request of the British authorities at Madras he accepted that post, and also presided over the native Court of Justice.[1]

But whatever else the exigences of the times might require Schwartz to be, a *missionary* he *would* be. He never for a moment forgot the commission he had received from the King of kings. Though a diplomatist, a judge, the guardian of a sovereign prince, and a mediator between contending powers, he could still say, '*One thing I do*;' he was ever witnessing for his Master. On one occasion he visited Ceylon, and by his fervent zeal and stirring addresses infused new life into the Dutch missions in that island. He performed other missionary tours, chiefly on foot, to Cuddalore, Madras, Tanjore, and Trichinopoly. Everywhere a holy enthusiasm marked him and left its impress

[1] Sir John Shore, afterwards Lord Teignmouth and Governor-General of India, in a minute to the Court of Directors, says of Schwartz, that 'he has never heard his name mentioned without respect, who is as distinguished for the sanctity of his manners as for his ardent zeal in the promulgation of his religion.'

Alas! 'another king arose who knew not Joseph.' Ere long a new spirit came over the Court of Directors and their representatives in India; missionary enterprise was forbidden, and again and again were the successors of Schwartz denounced and driven from the country. As late as 1816 an order was issued by the Indian Government, 'that missionaries were not to preach to the natives, or suffer the native converts to do so; not to distribute religious tracts, or suffer the people to do so; not to send forth converted natives, or to take any steps, by conversion or otherwise, to persuade the natives to embrace Christianity!'—Rev. J. Long's *Handbook of Bengal Missions*, p. 31.

Those were dark days of reproach! Bless God that *that* darkness is past and that better counsels now prevail! The following passage from a Government document, printed three years ago by order of the House of Commons, will be read with thankfulness and satisfaction: 'The Government of India cannot but acknowledge the great obligation under which it is laid by the benevolent exertions made by those 600 missionaries, whose blameless example and self-denying labours are infusing new vigour into the stereotyped life of the great populations placed under English rule, and are preparing them to be in every way better men and better citizens of the great empire in which they dwell.'—*Statement exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India during the year* 1871-2.

behind him. At length he fixed his head-quarters at Trichinopoly; there, as the agent of the Christian Knowledge Society, for a time he lived and laboured. 'Here, on an income of forty-eight pounds a year, dressed in dimity dyed black, eating rice and vegetables cooked in native fashion, and living in a room of an old building just large enough to hold himself and his bed, Schwartz devoted himself, with the utmost simplicity, combined with an enthusiasm which consumed him, to his apostolic labours among the inhabitants of the city and neighbourhood.'[1]

Some years later he found his way to Tinnevelly. The Danish missionaries had already taken possession of the town of Palamcottah. In 1771 a native preacher had been appointed to this station. Schwartz fostered and furthered the good work which the natives had begun. At length he had the satisfaction of arranging for the confirmation of 100 converts at that place. In 1785 he again visited that mission and administered the Holy Communion to 80 persons out of a congregation of 160. Such was the beginning of that great and glorious work over which we now rejoice in the district of Tinnevelly. Schwartz did not confine his efforts to Palamcottah; he, in conjunction with Jœnicke, an able and earnest missionary sent out by the Christian Knowledge Society in 1788, by a series of itinerations helped to spread the truth through other parts of that province. A number of chapels also were set up at his expense. Now 'the little one has become a thousand.' In the present day the two great missionary societies of the Church of England can rejoice over a native Christian community of upwards of 60,000 persons.

After the decease of Schwartz and Jœnicke the work in Southern India languished for want of men. In 1807 there were only three missionaries to superintend the districts of

[1] Sherring's *Protestant Missions in India*, p. 33.

Tanjore, Trichinopoly, and Tinnevelly! The latter province was almost left to take care of itself. At length in 1816 the Rev. J. Hough, a devoted Government chaplain, was appointed to Palamcottah. This good man became the 'nursing father' of the infant Church; he purchased a piece of land on which he erected two schoolrooms; from time to time he visited the village congregations, and established schools in different parts of the district. Ultimately the Church Missionary Society took up the good work which Mr. Hough had so successfully carried on. Its first missionaries to Tinnevelly were sent out in 1820.

In the meantime several stations in the district remained nominally attached to the Christian Knowledge Society. In 1829 this Society surrendered the charge of those stations to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Thus, side by side, have the two great missionary organisations of our Church laboured with a holy and friendly emulation for forty-seven years. They have divided the land between them, and the blessing of Heaven has rested on the labours of each. The Church Missionary Society was the first in the field, and has always had the largest staff of labourers. About two-thirds of the native Christian community belong to its missions. It is an interesting reflection that, whilst we write, the two senior missionaries of the sister societies (Dr. Caldwell and Dr. Sargent) are awaiting consecration as the first Missionary Bishops of Tinnevelly.[1]

[1] We would not pass over in silence a memorable and graceful proceeding of the London Missionary Society in 1865. That society had, many years previously, planted six stations in the south-western portion of Tinnevelly; these were in connection with its older missions in Travancore. As time advanced and the Propagation Society increased its congregations, the missions of the respective societies began to intersect each other. An amicable conference took place between the representatives of each of the societies, and, as Dr. Caldwell expresses it, 'the six congregations referred to were made over, in the most generous way, by the London Missionary Society to the Propagation Society.' The former society engaged to restrict its operations to the province of Travancore. Such an incident deserves recording as an exemplary illustration of what should be the common law of missions—*non-interference and large-hearted charity.*

Turning our attention to Bengal we find in 1758 the Christian Knowledge Society sending to Calcutta the Rev. J. Kiernander, a Danish missionary. Only one year before had the great battle been fought on the plains of Plassy which transferred to Britain the supremacy in Bengal. Colonel Clive, the renowned victor in that noted contest, had seen Kiernander in the Madras Presidency, and had been struck with the beneficial effects of his labours. Clive made no great pretension to religious feeling, but he saw neither peril nor bad policy in welcoming an earnest missionary to the province which his sword had so lately won. He gave Mr. Kiernander a house to live in, and, together with the members of his council, encouraged him in the prosecution of his evangelistic objects. The missionary began by establishing a school, which in the first year contained 174 pupils. A number of conversions rewarded his faithful toil; among those whom he received into the Church was a Brahman—the first Brahman baptised in Bengal! As in South India so in Bengal, the Christian Knowledge Society extended a helping hand to the work which the Danes commenced. After aiding the operations for some years by supplying funds, the society at length sent out a second missionary, a Mr. Diemer, from Halle.

Mr. Kiernander married a lady with a considerable fortune. Up to that period Calcutta had no church of any kind; the worthy missionary resolved to supply this crying defect. He expended in 1770 more than 6,500*l.* in the erection of the first church at the capital of British India. This building, called 'The Mission Church,' is still in existence. For more than century back has it been a witness to the truth; from its pulpit has a noble company of preachers successfully proclaimed the pure truths of the gospel; and within its precincts may now be seen sacred mementoes of those whose pleadings in times past were heard within its walls—thus, David Browne, Thomason, Henry Martyn, Corrie, Dealtry, and Daniel Wilson,

are worthily commemorated. May its candlestick never be removed, and may it never lack fitting successors to those departed worthies! The church is now in the hands of the Church Missionary Society, and its services are conducted by its secretaries for the time being.

Kiernander may with truth be termed the Apostle of Northern India. He died in 1799, in the eighty-eighth year of his age; he had spent forty-one years in India without once revisiting Europe. Schwartz, the Apostle of Southern India, passed to his rest just one year earlier, after forty-eight years of unbroken toil in the land of his adoption. Verily, there were missionary giants in those days.[1]

Mr. Kiernander began his work, as we have seen, under the sunshine of official favour; but he lived into *the dark age*; he lived to witness the reign of official cowardice and anti-Christian bitterness. We blush to think of certain facts of that gloomy era; and, as we record them for our common humiliation, the cry ascends from our heart, 'Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers!' In 1793 a director of the East India Company stated publicly 'that were 100,000 natives converted, he should hold it as the greatest calamity that could befall India.' In the same year did a member of the Court of Proprietors declare at the India House, 'that the sending of missionaries to our Eastern territories is the most wild, extravagant, expensive, unjustifiable project that was ever suggested by the most visionary speculator; that the project would affect the ultimate security of our Eastern possessions;' and yet that gentleman professed to be a

[1] Very touching is the story of the closing scenes in the life of this latter missionary hero. 'In his last illness a transient improvement in his condition enabled him to visit his church at the Christmas festival. The congregation was wild with excitement, and he could scarcely make his way through the crowd. At his death in February a long and bitter cry of lamentation arose from multitudes, and the Rajah [of Tanjore] shed a flood of tears over his body, and covered it with a cloth of gold.' Sherring's *Protestant Missions in India*, p. 55.

follower of Him who said, 'Preach the gospel to every creature.' But he was a *proprietor*, and what were perishing millions to good *dividends*? The extension of the Episcopate to India was viewed with such alarm, that it was argued that if this 'wild scheme' were carried out, 'our empire would not be worth a day's purchase.' And when finally the *terrible* event took place, and, in 1814, Bishop Middleton, the first Bishop of Calcutta, was consecrated, the publication of the sermon preached on the occasion was forbidden as being fraught with peril.[1]

Six years before Kiernander's course was run, and in the very year when the 'director' and 'proprietor' so vigorously denounced missionary intrusion, a young missionary had the audacity to 'run the blockade.' That young man had conceived the daring enterprise as, with Hebrew and Greek grammars before him, he had toiled for his living by making shoes. When his own heart began to burn on the subject he spoke to his Christian brethren. He was a baptist, and his name was Carey—a more honoured name the missionary roll does not contain. Scant was the sympathy which he received. Perhaps we shall be pardoned if, with thankful pride, we record the fact that the first minister in London who bade him God speed was a well-known clergyman of the English Church, 'the venerable John Newton, who advised him with the fidelity and tenderness of a father.'[2]

Ultimately this eminent man went out under the auspices of the Baptist Missionary Society. Some address was called for in making good his footing in Bengal. As missionaries were 'contraband articles,' he obtained an appointment as superintendent of an indigo factory at Malda. There, in the swamps of the Sunderbuns, he, for five years, laboured in silence and obscurity. He preached to the servants of the factory, and

[1] Rev. J. Long's *Handbook of Bengal Missions*, p. 14.

[2] *Carey, Marshman, and Ward*, by Mr. John Marshman, pp. 12, 13.

occasionally ventured with the good news into the neighbouring villages. During that period he translated the whole of the New Testament into Bengali.

In 1799 four other missionaries in an American vessel arrived in the Hooghly. The Government were no sooner apprised of this, than they took measures to seize and deport the intruders. Happily there was a Refuge-city, to which the four offenders had already betaken themselves. Serampore, a town on the Hooghly, sixteen miles to the north of Calcutta, was a Danish settlement; thither the missionaries fled. But they were *Englishmen*, and so British subjects; accordingly a demand for their surrender was made to the Danish Governor. To his honour be it spoken, Colonel Bie disregarded the demand and sheltered the offenders; and, to the credit of Marquis Wellesley, the Governor-General, be it also told that he did not repeat the demand.

The four missionaries were Baptists. The patronage accorded by the Danish authority at Serampore resulted in the establishment of a mission of the Baptist Society at that place. Dr. Carey joined his brethren, a press was introduced, Biblical translation was the main feature in the efforts to which he and his able colleagues devoted themselves. When it is remembered that either the whole or portions of the sacred Scriptures were translated by them into Bengalee, Sanscrit, Persian, Ooriya, Mahratta, and Chinese, it will be seen how deeply indebted are missionaries of other societies to the labours of those eminent men.

The London Missionary Society sent out its first missionary to North India in 1798. Mr. Forsyth found protection under the Dutch flag at Chinsurah, and carried on mission work at that station for many years.

In 1807 we find the Church Missionary Society first turned its attention to Bengal; in that year it sent a liberal sum of money to be expended in translational efforts. In 1812 it formed

a Corresponding Committee in Calcutta; in 1815 it commenced actual work by founding a school at Kidderpore, in the suburbs of the city; in 1816 it sent out its first missionaries; these were the Rev. Messrs Greenwood and Schrœter, the former was an Englishman, the latter a German. In 1821 the society purchased an estate at Mirzapore, a district of Calcutta; on that spot there is now a church, schools, three missionary houses, and several hundred native Christians.

In 1818 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel opened a communication with Bishop Middleton as to the best method of appropriating 5,000*l.*, the sum which they had allotted to mission work in North India. The Bishop had already set his heart on founding a college for the training of mission agents. He recommended the society to support that object. The Church Missionary Society contributed a similar sum, and in 1820 the foundation-stone of Bishop's College, Calcutta, was laid. It would be wrong to speak of that institution as an entire failure, it has done real good in its day. The labours of those eminent men who have presided over it in days gone by have not been lost; not a few well-qualified and earnest students have done credit to the training which they received within its walls. It may do much more good in days to come; but, for reasons which we cannot here discuss, it has undoubtedly failed to realise the bright anticipations of its founders.

Bishop Middleton, with the aid of the Christian Knowledge Society, established a number of vernacular schools in Calcutta and its neighbourhood. In 1826 the society made over its schools to the Propagation Society. Soon after, the Venerable Society sent out the Rev. T. Morton, its first missionary, a man of considerable ability, who, by the publication of a Bengali dictionary and other vernacular works, rendered important service to the great cause of missions in Bengal.

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland sent its first missionary representatives to Bengal in 1830. How the

most eminent of its agents inaugurated the era of English education we noticed in the last chapter. When, in 1844, the disruption took place in the Church of Scotland, Dr. Duff and others of his brethren joined the seceders; thus, from that period, Scotch missions in Calcutta and Bengal have been represented by the agents of the General Assembly of the Kirk and those of the Free Church of Scotland. Right well have they shown how to 'agree to differ,' and how to provoke each other's zeal by a holy rivalry in well-doing.

As regards the Presidency town of Bombay, it is again somewhat humiliating to acknowledge that, not to Britons but to Americans belongs the credit of first carrying the Gospel to that city. It is especially humbling when the story of their arrival is told. In 1813 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sent out six missionaries to Calcutta. The Government refused them permission to land, and ordered them at once to leave the country. Two of those good men contrived to make their way to Bombay. The Governor of the Western Presidency, Sir Evan Nepean, was a man of deep religious principle; he received the refugees; but, ere long, a peremptory order arrived from the Supreme Government, charging Sir Evan immediately to deport the intruders. The godly Governor ventured to disobey the order, but he at the same time made an earnest representation of the case to the authorities in India and at home. Whilst negotiations were in progress, war broke out between England and America; yet, ultimately, the missionaries were suffered to remain.

Seven years later the Church Missionary Society sent out its first missionary to Bombay. In 1823 the Scottish Missionary Society entered on the same field. The Propagation Society commenced its work in that city in 1859.

We have seen that in 1726 Schultze, with the aid of the Christian Knowledge Society, founded the first mission in the city of Madras. About the beginning of the present century

the London Missionary Society sent its first agents to this city. In 1806 official prejudice against evangelical operations showed itself in an order from the Governor of Madras prohibiting 'the formation of a Bible Association or Committee, or even the general circulation of a subscription paper.' Still the Word of God grew and prevailed. In 1815 the Church Missionary Society commenced its work in the southern capital by sending thither two German missionaries. One year later the Wesleyan Mission was established in Madras; this was followed in 1836 by a branch of the same American Society as in 1813 had begun the mission in Bombay. The Church of Scotland began its work in Madras in 1837.[1]

We have thus taken a brief and rapid glance at the origin

[1] Besides the honoured societies specified in the preceding sketch there are several others which entered the country at more recent dates. It is a common and not unnatural impression that the presence of so many different missionary bodies must act as a prejudice to the great cause of missions. 'Surely,' says an outsider, 'the heathen must be puzzled and deterred by the spectacle of so many different forms of faith!' True, so it would be, if each society really presented a different aspect of the faith; so it would be if the hand of each society were raised against its fellows; but it is quite otherwise when the heathen find, as they do find, that the missionaries of those different societies preach so much alike that they can detect no difference between them, especially when they see the agents of those various societies working together, notwithstanding their varieties, in harmony and love. The thing then strikes the thoughtful heathen in a new light altogether; they say—we have heard them say it—'Well, whatever the points of difference may be, the one fact of fundamental agreement is too patent to be denied.' The moral effect of this impression is worth something among those who are so familiar with party strifes and conventional animosities among themselves. Happily whatever may be the state of things at home, the day has not yet come in India when the heathen would be led to exclaim, 'See how these Christians *hate* each other!' Four years ago it was our privilege to attend the great Missionary Conference at Allahabad, when representatives of all those societies were present. In that Conference, we venture to say, there were as true sons of the Church of England as are to be found anywhere. There were true and honest Dissenters too; no compromise of any kind was asked or made. 'Owe no man anything, but to *love* one another' might have been the motto of that gathering. United prayers and consultations of several days were wound up by a united *Communion*; and it may gratify some of our readers and soften their prejudice to be told that the Dissenting missionaries requested two of the Church missionaries to administer the holy ordinance according to the rites of the Church of England, whilst they reverently came around and received the sacred elements from their hands.

and early development of missionary operations in India; but the time would fail us to tell of the gradual extension of those operations amidst the teeming populations, the ancient cities, the numerous villages, the vast plains, and the hilly ranges comprehended within the bounds of the three Presidencies. The time would fail us to tell the story of physical endurance, moral heroism, self-sacrifice, soul-consuming zeal, of singular erudition, of still more marvellous faith and love, of patient and persistent toil through long years of seeming fruitlessness, which have distinguished not a few Indian missionaries. Many of these 'have gone up higher,' some are still adorning the posts they fill. Of all such it may be said 'their record is on high;' and, as we think of the varied graces which have marked some of these worthies, and the mean estimation in which the world has held them, the words seem to rise to our lips, 'Of whom the world was not worthy!' Verily, we missionaries of a later generation have only to study the annals of our fathers to find, it may be, food for humiliation, and incentives to a higher missionary life.

We pass on to speak of the *visible outcome* of all this in the present number and character of the native Christian community.

As regards *number*, we cannot do better than cite a passage from the interesting Government document to which we have already, in a previous note, referred. The Blue Book in question says, 'The statistical returns state very clearly and completely the number of the converts who have been gathered into the various Indian missions, and the localities in which they may be found. They show also that a great increase has taken place in the number of these converts during the last twenty years; as might be expected from the lapse of time, the effects of earlier instruction, and the increased number of missionaries employed. In 1852 the entire number of Protestant native converts in India, Burmah, and Ceylon amounted to 22,400 communicants

in a body of 128,000 native Christians of all ages. In 1862 the communicants were 49,688, and the native Christians were 213,182. In 1872 the communicants were 78,494, and the converts, young and old, numbered 318,363.'

No doubt the number of communicants is what we may term the *vital* statistic; for this tends to show the proportion of earnest spiritual life existing in the native Christian community. But at present we are dealing with the grand total of that community. The broad fact then meets us that, four years ago, this comprised a body of nearly 320,000 persons. But the most striking feature is the actual *ratio of increase.* If we compare the statistics of 1852 and 1872, we see that, in a period of twenty years, the native Christians have multiplied at a rate of 150 per cent. Suppose this rate of increase to continue, and, in less than 150 years, the Christian community will be equal to the present population of India—say, 250,000,000. But it will be observed that the ratio of increase in the *last* of the two decades is much greater than in the former; thus it is quite supposable, and, indeed, probable, that each succeeding decade will show a proportionate advance in the ratio. If, therefore, any of our readers prefer *figures* to faith, and numerical probabilities to a quiet reliance on prophetic assurances, they may readily satisfy themselves that the prospect of India's evangelisation is neither so visionary or so remote as many persons imagine.

For ourselves, we do not attach much importance to such calculations. Unlooked-for events may hasten or impede the grand consummation; still we have as good ground to *hope* as to fear in this matter, and no one, we think, can contemplate the general aspect of native society in India without an impression that the God of missions may do *a short work* in that land. The day may not be very far distant when the manifold agencies, destructive and constructive, so long operating in the country, shall eventuate in some grand crisis when whole masses

of the population shall desert the old citadel and come over to the Christian camp.

Whenever that takes place, it will assuredly be found that the Gospel net will enclose *bad* fish as well as good, and that, probably, the former will predominate. But so the Master, in the simile referred to, led us to expect it would be; so it ever has been from Apostolic times downward; so especially was it in the promulgation of Christianity in heathen Europe; *mass-conversions* was the leading feature; kings were baptised, and with them hundreds of their nobles and thousands of their subjects. Out of that rough material has the present Church been built up. And what is the character of the present Church, but that of *a Church within a Church?* The true, the living Church, still rests as a kernel in the bosom of the outward and visible Church.

So is it with the Church in India, the great body of native Christians, without doubt, correspond to nominal Christians at home. They are not hypocrites, they intellectually embrace the facts and doctrines of the Gospel. Morally and socially they have been elevated by Christianity; there is no question that, generally speaking, their moral standard is considerably higher than that of the heathen around; indeed, in this respect, they need not shrink from comparison with their brethren in Christendom.

A large proportion of these are the children of the original converts, and they, to a great extent, reflect the characteristics of their parents. Varied were the influences and diverse the motives which actuated those converts in their profession of Christianity. Very many took that step from an intellectual conviction of the truth of our holy religion; they had no deep sense of need, no profound yearning after divine things, but they came to feel that, in a comparison of Christianity with their own systems, there was no room to doubt its superiority; hence they embraced the *better* faith.

In those cases where conversion has assumed the aspect of a popular movement—where considerable masses of the population have been gathered into the Church—motives of a very inferior, not to say sinister, character have been brought into play. Tinnevelly in South India and Krishnaghur in Bengal furnish illustrations of this feature.

A sketch of the rise and progress of the latter mission will furnish a fair sample of the nature of such movements and of the mixed motives which characterise the converts In 1832 the Church Missionary Society established a school in the town of Krishnaghur, which is the capital of the district bearing that name. In a short time one hundred boys were gathered into the school; through the medium of the pupils the missionary, Mr. Deer, was brought into contact with their parents. Before the year was out five adults were baptised. General consternation and fierce animosity attended this commencement of the work. But other enquirers appeared, and in a very short time seven families of the singular sect called Karta Bhajas (see p. 206) were added to the Church. The missionary after this visited Europe. He was once more at his post in 1835; he and another missionary, Mr. Kruckeberg, began to visit the Karta Bhajas in different parts of the district. During the course of a year thirty members of this sect were baptised. A violent persecution raged against them; one was poisoned, the wives and children of others were taken from them, and were only restored on the interposition of the magistrate. Two years later we find the head men of ten villages of Karta Bhajas craving instruction in Christianity; they were ultimately baptised. Forthwith they established public Christian worship in their respective villages. Their position in some measure screened them from the violence of the heathen, but all who ventured to attend the services which they conducted did so at their peril. The commotion rapidly spread, and the entrance of a missionary into any of the neighbouring villages was the signal for alarm and bitter

animosity. On one occasion the people cried out, 'What! has the pestilence reached us also?' In that village there was but one enquirer; his two brothers fled from their home in sheer fright, lest they should catch the infection!

So far, that is, up to the year 1838, the movement bore the stamp of genuine earnestness; so far as appeared, the sole moving principle was *spiritual concern*; no temporal advantages rewarded a change of religion, on the contrary, suffering and loss, hatred and obloquy, fell upon the converts. Their faith was thus a *tried faith*; and well did they stand the test.

A new phase came over the movement in the latter half of 1838. This really constituted a crisis of a most momentous character; God's hand was in it. The river Jellinghi rose to an unprecedented height, the country was inundated, and the whole of the crops, then ripe for the sickle, were destroyed. Christians and heathen were involved in one common calamity, they had neither food for the coming year nor seed for the next season. Was it very wonderful that the sympathy of European Christians manifested itself in this dire time of need in the relief of the suffering Christians? It would have been more wonderful had it been otherwise. Five thousand rupees were placed in the hands of the missionaries. With a portion of this sum they purchased rice and sailed in boats over the flooded fields distributing it to the sufferers in the different villages. The remainder of the money they advanced in loans to be repaid when the times should improve.

This very proceeding, natural and right as it was in itself, gave birth to those inferior motives which marred the movement; and who cannot see that the origin of those motives was as natural as was the cause which gave them birth? The heathen around were in deep distress; they might look in vain to Hindus or Mussulmans for help; if they betook themselves to the native money-lender, 100 per cent. was the rate of interest which he demanded. Before their eyes was the strange

spectacle of Christian charity; the Christian community was a Goshen in the midst of Egypt; the converts had light, and peace, and plenty in their dwellings, whilst darkness, and misery, and want reigned around.[1] Was it wonderful that motives half selfish, half sincere, wrought in the minds of the astonished spectators? 'Become Christians and relief is sure to come,' said the *selfish half.* 'Surely the religion which so abounds in lovingkindness and tender sympathy must be a better and a truer religion than ours, which knows nothing of such fruits,' said the *sincerer half.* 'Come with us,' said the Christians, 'and we will do you good; our heaven-born faith has promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.' What was the upshot? Before the year 1838 had closed, 600 families, numbering some 3,000 individuals, offered themselves as candidates for admission into the Christian Church. On one day the Bishop of Calcutta witnessed the baptism of 900 persons. Shall we censure the enthusiasm of the Bishop, shall we chide the fervour of Christian people which led them to see in all this a repetition of Pentecostal blessings?

And yet it was hardly a Pentecost. Thousands with slender faith and scanty knowledge embraced the name of Christ. Amongst these were many hundreds of Mohammedans. One of the Mohammedan converts, with a simple and ingenuous candour, said, 'he hoped God would be more favourable to him when he worshipped Jesus Christ than when he worshipped Mohammed, for then they had nothing but trouble, but with the Christians they found *pity*, as also *money and rice*, which they did not obtain from the Zemindars.'[2] He might have been the spokesman of the majority thus gathered within the

[1] It must not be supposed that the missionaries helped none but Christians in that time of extremity. They did what they could for others, but as, in such a widespread calamity, it was impossible efficiently to relieve *all* the sufferers, they took the Apostolic rule as their guide, 'As we have opportunity let us do good unto all men, *especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*'—Gal. vi. 10.

[2] Rev. J. Long's *Handbook of Bengal Missions*, p. 185.

Christian fold. 'We find *pity* and *help*' was really the voice of converted thousands. It was a voice which fell far short of the agonising cry, 'Men and brethren what shall we do?' (Acts ii. 37). And yet it was a *natural* voice, and it was *true*.

The swelling numbers of needy Christians naturally evoked fresh efforts of Christian charity. Needful relief was vouchsafed; money to be returned, *without interest*, was lent. A calamity such as marked the year 1838 left its impress for several years to come. ''Tis pleasant to borrow, 'tis painful to repay,' is an axiom which others than Bengali converts can understand. And, if perchance the creditor be peculiarly lenient and trustful, the *evil day* is sure to be deferred. But the longer deferred the stronger does the hope of ultimate escape become. In the meantime *conscience* is damaged and weakened, and the moral standard lowered. Such, if we tell the true story, has been the state of things in the mission with which we are dealing. The creditor ceased to demand repayment, and the debtor *forgot to make it*.

Such a large accession of converts necessitated organised schemes of management. The Christians, for mutual support and encouragement, formed themselves into separate villages; an European missionary settled down in each of the principal villages as the pastor of the flock. Churches were built and schools commenced, but all this at *the society's cost*. No doubt it was an anomaly that, from the day the people professed themselves Christians they ceased to bear religious charges. As Hindus and Mohammedans they had liberally supported their institutions and teachers; happy would it have been had the old rule been sustained and perpetuated; under ordinary circumstances this would have been the right thing to do; but here were communities subsisting on charity and burdened with debt—what could they give? and who could ask them to give?

The children were gathered into the schools; for the time

being it was needful to clothe and feed as well as educate them. The missionary looked wistfully for the day when the rule of dependence would give place to one of Christian liberality and manly vigour. The day was slow in coming; it has not yet come. If European Christians, with their better advantages, are so slow to learn that great lesson, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' it is hardly surprising that the native Christians with such a training obstinately adhered to the *converse* of that rule. This was but too natural, and the effect, we need scarcely say, was to nourish a feeble and unsatisfactory type of Christianity.

As time went on, other mixed motives began to operate. From time immemorial the people of India have been marked for their litigious tendencies; the poor and weak, again, have ever been oppressed by the rich and powerful. Observers were not slow in discovering the immense advantage enjoyed by the Christians in having a missionary, one of the ruling race, for their friend and advocate. Influenced by such a consideration, not a few placed themselves among the ranks of the catechumens. They began, no doubt, at a very low level; yet, commingled with the selfish aim, was a certain vague impression that Christianity rested on a basis of truth and justice. Many a pleasing story might be told of those who, starting on such a defective principle, have rapidly advanced in light, and knowledge, and faith, until, at length, they have become 'burning and shining lights.' In this way many a rough and rude block of stone which has found its way into the outer court of the temple has, by the great Master-builder, been subsequently smoothed and fashioned for a place in the inner sanctuary.

We have thus endeavoured to give a faithful picture of one of those popular movements which have contributed to swell the bulk of the native Christian community. But there is another picture, and one which charms the eye with its glowing and beauteous tints. Numbered amongst the Christians of India

are multitudes of persons the narrative of whose conversion would grace the fairest page in the history of the Church of Christ. A few of such instances we have given in the preceding chapter; it would require several chapters to tell the whole story. Suffice it to say that, if deep repentance, earnest faith and burning love, if complete self-sacrifice, if a cheerful surrender of all that men hold dear in life, if a fearless confession of Christ at any cost, be marks of genuine conversion, then has the Church of India multitudes of confessors within her pale distinguished by these marks.

As we before remarked, the number of native communicants is an important criterion of the spiritual life of the Church. The statistics already given show that the proportion of these to the whole body of the Christians is about *one in four*. The Church in India will thus, in this respect, bear a favourable comparison with the Church at home. This will be still more clearly seen when it is borne in mind that, generally speaking, a stricter rule of admission to the holy ordinance obtains in India than is common at home.

In estimating the essential value of native Christianity we should never forget the fiery trial to which it was exposed in the terrible crisis of the Mutiny. We ourselves passed through the whole of that dreadful period, and as we look back upon that reign of terror and bloodshed, we rejoice at the fact that, though native Christians laid down their lives as martyrs, some of them glorifying Christ with their dying breath, not a single instance came to our knowledge of one who denied the faith which he had embraced. To a man they were true to us and our cause. Surely, in seeking for tokens of good and grounds of hope, we should not lightly pass by facts like these. Come what may, come what will in the future, the Church in India is too surely grounded for the 'gates of hell' ever to prevail against it.

'There must be also *heretics* among you, that they which

are approved may be made manifest' (1 Cor. xi. 19). Looking to the past history of the propagation of Christianity in the world, we should be led to expect some verification of this utterance in the Indian Church. If it be so that heresies are akin to certain fungi which will only grow on the stem of a living tree, then are these excrescences signs of life in the Church. We can hardly, however, regret that *so few* have appeared in India. The two most noteworthy have occurred in connection with the Church Missionary Society's missions.

More than twenty years ago a remarkable man, named Ramaya Baba, came into contact with our missionaries in Benares. As a Hindu he had exercised prodigious influence over a large body of disciples, who regarded him as a being of singular sanctity and power. After a lengthened period of desultory intercourse with the missionaries, he avowed himself a believer in Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. His course of life was so erratic, that his instructors felt somewhat doubtful respecting him; still, his confession of faith being sound and apparently sincere, they at length baptised him. It was hoped that his great influence would be used for the furtherance of the truth, and that many of his disciples would thus be gathered into the Church. The result was otherwise; he aspired to be the founder of a new sect. He blended the worship of Christ with that of Ram; he wrote great numbers of hymns for use amongst his followers; these contained a strange admixture of Hinduism and Christianity. Still, he and his adherents called themselves Christians, and baptism at the hands of Ramaya Baba was essential to admission into the fraternity. The leader died some time back, but the sect still remains.

The other schism took place in the district of Megnanapuram, in South India. Caste prejudices seem to have originated this movement. A number of the Shanar converts wished to uphold their caste distinctions. The missionary in charge of the station

(Nazareth) resisted this tendency; the schism followed as the consequence of his opposition. In a short time the sectaries numbered some 2,000 souls. They call themselves in their documents, 'The Hindu Church of the Lord Jesus;' but they seem to prefer the definition of 'The National Party.' Their animus is to eliminate everything which appears to them to be of European origin; they consider infant baptism and an ordained ministry to be foreign inventions, accordingly they reject both. On the same ground they keep Saturday instead of Sunday as their Sabbath; they also celebrate an ordinance which they regard as the Lord's Supper by the use of the unfermented juice of the grape.[1]

No doubt the great Head of the Church knows how to extract *good* out of evils such as these. One illustration of this is seen in the *testing ordeal* which accrues to the Church. In the case of the schism in South India most earnest and persistent efforts were made by its supporters to involve the whole body of Christian Shanars in the movement. As regards the vast majority of these, the attempt utterly failed; thus 'those who were approved were made manifest.'

This leads us to speak of the *inner Church.* 'The kingdom of God is within you,' said the Master. Bless God, his spiritual reign has been set up in the hearts of thousands of those who in India have bowed the head to his sceptre. Try them by whatever test we may, we find them approved as the regenerated children of the Most High. It has been our privilege to mix with many such, and we have no hesitation in saying that amongst them are Christians so advanced in the life of grace, that we have, as it were, sat at their feet and learned the deep things of God. Again and again have we traced with wondering delight the manifest tokens of divine illumination which many of our converts present. Out of the many cases which

[1] Vide *Ten Years' Missionary Labour in India, between* 1852 *and* 1861, by the Rev. Dr. Mullens, pp. 51, 52.

might be instanced we will only select a few; and these shall be those of persons well known to ourselves.

We have already spoken of the *mixed motives* which influence some of the converts; we will here give an example or two of a higher and holier type of motive. One day a man whom we had never seen before presented himself in our verandah. We were struck by the appearance of the man; his face wore an expression of genuine and deep anxiety; there was a touch of simple, sorrowful sweetness in the look which he gave us as with trembling lips he said, 'Saheb, I have come to you in deep distress; I am very miserable—Oh! what shall I do to find peace and salvation!' He got thus far when we observed a change come over his countenance; his knees began to shake, and down he fell like a stone at our feet. He had swooned away. We carried him into the house and tried to restore him. After a while consciousness returned; we then learnt his strange and touching story. He had been employed in a Christian family; he had watched their walk, and, unknown to themselves, had listened to their family devotions; the result had been a growing concern for his soul's salvation; his anxiety and distress at length became unbearable; for some reason or other, he shrank from revealing his state of mind to his employers; he merely asked them to release him from his duties, as he felt himself no longer equal to their due discharge. In this state of mind he had found his way to our abode. His mental anguish had been such that *for three days he had tasted no food.* By subsequent enquiries we found the whole of his story to be strictly true. It was a singular privilege to lead such a crushed and burdened soul to cast his sins and sorrows on Him who is mighty to save. He found the peace he sought, and went on his way rejoicing.

The other instance is one of similar earnestness. This case illustrates the *social cross* which not a few of the converts have to take up. A man had been visiting us as an enquirer for months; of his sincerity there could be no doubt; his faith grew with

his knowledge, a deep sense of sin oppressed him, still he hesitated to confess his faith by baptism. He had a wife and three children; he knew what would be the terrible penalty of his conversion—the *loss of his family* was that penalty; his wife and her friends were bitterly opposed to the step he contemplated, and they assured him that his baptism should be the signal for a complete and final severance from those he held so dear. Was it strange that he delayed? He hoped the delay might be justified by the conversion of his wife. It was *not* so; she remained as harsh and hostile as ever. What was he to do? After long hoping against hope, he one day came to us and, with an agonised but firm expression, said, 'Saheb, I dare not delay any longer! I know not the moment when death may come, and I have not yet confessed Christ openly—I am still outside the Fold; baptise me at once, and I will accept the consequences.' He was baptised, and the consequences were just what he feared—he had gained Christ, but had *lost his wife and children.* He lived in isolation and solitude for months; but a brighter day at length dawned, his faithfulness was recompensed; after a while his wife and children returned, and he had the felicity of witnessing their admission to the Church of Christ.

Very pleasant is it to note the simple, childlike trust and holy joy which characterise some of the native Christians. Were we asked to point to one of the holiest and happiest believers we ever met with, we should, without doubt, indicate a sightless old man, a member of our native Church in Calcutta. More than twenty years back, he was struck blind by a flash of lightning. He was then a blind idolater, but the loss of his bodily sight brought him under Christian influences; thus he got *sight within.* From the day that he laid hold of Christ, he has walked in the light; for long years has he been to us a delightsome study; his features are lit up with a halo of singular peace and joy; ever and anon, the unobserved bystander may

catch some devout exclamation, as, 'Glory to Jesus! blessed be God!' rising from his lips. Never have we seen him sad or anxious, except in matters relating to *the Kingdom*—he 'travails in birth' for the salvation of souls. At least twenty of those whom it was our happiness to baptise were brought to the knowledge of Christ by the loving labours of this one blind believer.

Nor are similar instances of elevated piety wanting amongst our Christian women. We could tell of not a few who, like Mary, love to sit at the Master's feet and zealously strive to promote his glory. One such a mother in Israel belonged to our own flock; meek, modest, and retiring, she shrank from observation, but she rejoiced to carry the saving message to her benighted sisters. With her Bengali Bible in her hand, did she visit the neighbouring hospitals, and, passing from bed to bed, she read the Word of Life to the poor sufferers. Many a time have we seen a glow of loving delight come over the features of those sufferers as they spoke of their 'Guru-ma' (spiritual mother), the name by which they described their devoted Bible-woman. How many carried away with them to their homes the seed of truth, the great harvest alone will declare; but it was our happiness to receive into the Church by baptism *fifteen* women whose conversion rewarded the labours of this godly woman.

How much we have learnt by intercourse with our native brethren, how many useful and striking ideas we have at times gathered from them, we cannot easily declare. One example we may furnish of the power of illustrating divine truths which sometimes marks them. We were on one occasion conversing with a very simple and very earnest believer, also a member of our own Church. The topic of discourse was the two natures of a renewed soul. 'Saheb,' said our Bengali brother, 'I will tell you how I understand this matter. Now, if I get a severe blow on my finger-nail, what is the result? Why,

it inevitably dies; its life is forthwith destroyed, and that instant a new nail begins to form underneath it; but the old nail does not drop off immediately; O no! it still keeps its place, and a great deal of trouble and inconvenience does it occasion me—there is a contest between it and the new nail ever going on. But the great difference is here—the old nail does *not grow* any more, it is dead; on the other hand, the new nail keeps on growing, for it is *alive*; at length the contest ends, for the old nail drops off and the new nail appears.' Who could deny that his conception was as true as his illustration was apposite?

'The testimony of the Lord is sure, *making wise the simple.*' Not a few instances have we beheld of the marvellous illumination of the intellect which has followed the entrance of the Word into a dark and feeble mind. Amongst the poor of our flock was a man utterly illiterate—i.e., *before his conversion* he was such. But he no sooner apprehended the truth, than he conceived a thirst for knowledge; he speedily learnt to read and write. The Book of books was his daily delight and study; thus nourished with divine food, he grew in wisdom, in spiritual stature, and in favour with God and man. As we were one morning prosecuting our visits to the homes of the native gentry, a grateful surprise greeted us. On approaching a large house, we heard a sound as of some one preaching in the inner court. We paused to listen; we could hardly believe our ears, and yet there was no doubt about it—the preacher was the simple believer just spoken of. Whilst working for his living, he had found entrance to that house; and, when we entered, we beheld him speaking of the things of Jesus to a wondering body of educated native gentlemen. It was a charming scene, and as we gazed upon it, we thanked God and took courage. One of the gentlemen went with us aside, and said, 'I never heard anything so wonderful in my life; who would have thought that this poor ignorant outcaste could have learnt all he has, and

that we should learn at his lips lessons which we knew not before?'

This leads us to say a word on a peculiar feature in our converts—a feature which every experienced missionary is fully conscious of; it is, *the gradual elevation of their moral standard.* Many a young missionary has been shocked and disheartened by discovering how low that standard often is in the case of a converted heathen; it has startled and distressed him beyond measure to find one whom he has baptised as a true penitent and a sincere believer, guilty of lapses in regard to veracity and other matters of a moral bearing; perhaps he has been led to doubt the genuineness of the conversion, but, as time passes on, he finds that the moral standard of the sincere convert moves on *an ascending gradient*, that its lowest point rests in that degraded moral stratum in which Christianity found him, and that its highest point rises to 'Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report.' A real sense of guilt, of need and helplessness, has led him at the lowest point to grasp the moral lever of the Gospel, and by that lever he is henceforward enabled to rise: 'Excelsior!' is his cry and his effort. Thus he goes on unto perfection. O! it is very delightful to see, as we have seen, one such a convert, years after the great change has taken place, look down from his higher moral standing with shame and sorrow on the things which he said and did when occupying a lower level.

All who would form a just and accurate estimate of the effects of true conversion, must take into account the fearfully degenerate moral standing of the heathen. They will thus find it perfectly easy to conceive of a seeming anomaly; they can understand, to wit, that a true convert in a heathen land, with the life of God in him, may begin his course with a moral standard very much lower than that of a person in Christian England who is a stranger to renewing grace. In each case the

standard is made for the individual by the social atmosphere which surrounds him. The benign and holy influence of Christianity has thus placed merely nominal Christians on a moral platform many degrees higher than that of the heathen.

But here a very solemn contrast suggests itself. How often is it seen, in this respect, that that saying is true, 'The last shall be first and the first last'! You may witness the steady elevation of the moral standard of the converted heathen, and you may note the downward tendency of the conventional standard of the merely nominal Christian. You see the one after ten years of the teaching and training of God's Holy Spirit, elevated to a standard which the other, with all his advantages, never reached; and you may behold the other, after ten years of intercourse with the world—its business, its pleasures, its snares—sunk, it may be, below the level at which the convert started. If grace be in the soul, the moral standard is on a *gradient of ascent*; if grace be wanting, it is on an *incline*. The principle we are illustrating explains the phenomenon that, in the Epistles, the converts of Apostolic times are exhorted to put away lying, drunkenness, and other moral evils—evils which, at first sight, might appear to be incompatible with the idea of true conversion.

We sum up our account of native Christianity by an episode or two of touching interest. Some eight miles from our home in Calcutta is a village named Rammakal Choke. It is a station of the London Missionary Society. For the story we are about to tell, we are indebted to a recent work by a missionary of that Society.[1] One day, three men of this village, when visiting Calcutta, first heard the message of salvation. They presented themselves to the missionary as enquirers; for months they were growing in knowledge and faith. One of them, Ramjee, was the principal man of his village. He was the owner of a temple of Siva, before which thousands of persons used to pay

[1] *The Pioneers*; a Narrative of the Bengal Mission, by the Rev. G. Gogerly.

their devotions. This temple had been built by his ancestors; it stood on his own estate, and he had hitherto mainly supported the Brahman priest who performed the services.

Ramjee and his two friends were at length baptised. His position was a peculiarly trying one. It was impossible for him any longer to support the priest; it was equally impossible for him tacitly to sanction idolatry by permitting the idol shrine to remain. But it was perilous in the extreme to attempt its destruction, the bare mention of the thing raised a fierce storm of indignation; and he and his Christian friends were plainly told that dire vengeance awaited them if they lifted a hand against the venerable temple or its god. Ramjee and his friends strengthened themselves by constant communion and prayer. At length Ramjee, with more courage than Gideon of old, announced his intention on a given morning to destroy the shrine. Popular fury now knew no bounds; the heathen all around breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the three converts. The three friends, with their wives, met together for united prayer on the eventful morning. In the meantime, a vast concourse of infuriated idolaters had assembled before the temple. When the three prepared to sally forth on their hazardous undertaking, their wives seized their feet and, with bitter tears, implored them to forego their purpose. Truly it was a time of fiery trial; they had every reason to apprehend fatal consequences; yet, inspired with a courage more than human, they calmly set forth on their errand. No sooner were they seen than a wrathful howl of execration greeted them; they fully expected to be seized before they reached the temple, but, strange to say, they passed untouched through the dense crowd; curses were poured upon them, but not a finger was raised to arrest them. Their weeping wives followed them with trembling apprehension.

Ramjee and his friends ascended the platform on which the temple stood; he then turned to the excited multitude, beckoned for silence, and with affectionate earnestness appealed to the

spectators (much as the great prophet on Carmel had done before him) to choose whom they would serve—the one true and living God, or the senseless block which stood behind him. He then rushed upon the idol, raised it from its pedestal, and, with the shout, 'Behold your god!' hurled it on the ground at their feet. The effect of this bold act was to electrify the astounded crowd; they were overwhelmed with horror, dismay, and surprise—*surprise*, because as they looked on expecting to see the vengeance of Siva wreaked on his impious desecrators, the three noble confessors looked calmly down upon them, uninjured and unabashed. Ramjee availed himself of the crisis of consternation to make another appeal to the awe-stricken beholders.

At that moment a timid cry was heard; it proceeded from the weeping group of women, 'Joi! joi! Yesu Chreest!' (Victory! victory to Jesus Christ!). That cry, so seasonably raised, struck the keynote to which many a bewildered, astonished heart in the crowd responded, and, presently, one loud shout went up to heaven, 'Joi! joi! Yesu Chreest!' (Victory! victory to Jesus Christ!). Surely an episode like this is worthy to be had in remembrance. One chief object of ours in recording it, is to commemorate the interesting fact that the *first public shout of 'Victory to Jesus' in India proceeded on that day from the lips of Indian women!* Rammakal Choke may now be called a *Christian* village, and a Christian church stands on the spot formerly occupied by the Siva temple.

A LEPER CHURCH.

We have spoken of a 'Church within a Church.' A *Leper Church* is necessarily such a Church, though in a different sense to that in which we used the expression before. Leper Christians, though by divine grace made partakers of the common salvation, are, for obvious reasons, precluded from the 'communion of

the saints'—communion, that is, in the public celebration of the Holy Supper. In other ways they are cut off from intercourse with their brethren beyond their tainted circle. A separate section, therefore, in this chapter may well be devoted to their touching history.

Our readers are doubtless aware that the fearful disease of leprosy is most common in India, as, indeed, it is in most eastern countries. It has, we believe, been estimated that at the present time, there are over two hundred thousand lepers in India. The majority roam at large over the country, subsisting on precarious charity, whilst a minority of the sufferers settle down in almshouses and asylums provided for them in different parts of the country.

There are two forms of the disease. One is called skin-leprosy. This shows itself in a gradual *whitening* of the body. A white spot appears, it may be, in the palm of the hand. You see the person months hence, and find the hand and a great portion of the arm perfectly white; as time passes on, the discolouration of the body advances, until at length the whole body, from head to foot, wears a sickly white hue. So it remains until death. No further inconvenience is experienced; the dark man has become white; but his general health and his chances of life are not in any degree affected by the change. According to the Mosaic law, such a person was pronounced to be *clean* (see Lev. xiii. 12, 13). The more virulent form of the disease is that in which the *blood* is corrupted and the whole system impregnated with the terrible virus. The effects in this case are distressing and loathsome in the extreme. Sores break out in various parts of the body; chiefly on the hands and feet; old sores dry up, but others appear elsewhere; in the meantime the parts most affected begin to slough away; the body literally rots to pieces; the fingers and toes go joint by joint; frequently the whole hand and foot disappear. Excruciating pain attends the development of fresh sores; but these, once established, give

little trouble, and the poor leper may pass weeks or months free from acute pain. But he is dying by inches all the while. The course of the disease is much more rapid with some than with others. We have known some succumb in less than a year, and we have seen others linger on for ten or fifteen years.

We venture to think that, hitherto, no efficient remedy for the disorder has been found; we doubt whether any will be found. We have seen different specifics tried, but the hopes of the sufferers have in each case been raised only to be dashed again to the ground.

Some twenty-five years ago a consensus of medical opinion, founded on most copious data, settled the question of contagion. It was agreed that there was no probability of the disease being communicated by ordinary intercourse or by simple contact. No doubt sexual intercourse or accidental inoculation may communicate it.

In the city of Calcutta there exists a Lepers' Asylum. It is supported partly by a Government subsidy and partly by voluntary contributions. It comprises a separate department for each of the sexes. Each department has three wards for the patients; one is for Christians, the other two for Hindus and Mohammedans.

Some sixteen years ago, God, we think, put it into our heart to visit this asylum. Before that time the Rev. Timothy Sandys, a devoted and earnest missionary of the Church Missionary Society, had, in addition to his manifold labours, looked after the spiritual interests of the European and East-Indian patients in the asylum. We began our work amongst the Hindus and Mohammedans. It was a trying work—trying to our untutored nerves. The loathsome sights, and *not sights alone*, which our untrained senses encountered, were a sickening ordeal. But we were not alone in the trial and the effort; several of our dear native brethren joined us in the under-

taking. In time our nerves ceased to rebel, and so the work became less trying.

We passed from bed to bed, from ward to ward, declaring the message of love and mercy. It was a new story to those helpless, stricken listeners; some of them had spent years in useless pilgrimages, passing from shrine to shrine, bathing in sacred streams, feeing countless Brahmans—all with the hope of finding health and soundness. Hope, at length, had failed them; blank despair had settled upon them; still they clung to their refuges of lies;—'who was Jesus? and what could he do for them when Ram, Krishna, Durga, and the Ganges had failed?' We kept on our way for months, telling the 'Old, old story.' We believed in its power. At last a trembling voice asked, 'What must I do to be saved?' 'Believe,' said we, 'in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' He believed, and found peace. Thus the work began. Years rolled over, and at length, when we left the shores of India we looked back with comfort and joy to upwards of forty believing lepers whom it had been our privilege to gather into the Redeemer's kingdom. There was the 'Church within a Church;' a Church of converted lepers within the walls of that asylum as an inner circle of the larger Church outside.

We cannot describe, but we can well recollect, the abounding joy with which we saw the work of God advance in that gloomy region of suffering and death. O! to see the light of hope, the fire of love, and the courage of calm endurance, with which the Gospel inspired many of those leper converts was truly a rare and singular privilege. 'Saheb,' said one in a season of anguish, 'I am very feeble and full of pain; I cannot rise, I cannot eat; I feel as though the Lord were about to call me away; He knows best and may His will be done.' We spoke of the mercy of Him in whom he trusted. 'Indeed,' said the sufferer, 'He has shown mercy to me; the fact of His having brought me to this place to learn the way of salvation is a proof of His mercy

and love. My heart is fixed on Jesus, and Jesus alone; it is only through His merits and love that I hope to be saved.' A fierce paroxysm of agony followed; as we watched his writhings we breathed out a word of sympathy; his eyes filled with tears, and he exclaimed, 'Ah, but what an agony was that which Jesus endured on the cross for me!'

Poor Kumari was another whom we accompanied to the brink of Jordan; she also rejoicingly passed over, supported by the Everlasting Arms. She was a woman of high caste and good family; the disease had left her *face* untouched, and that was bright and comely; she was not thirty years of age. She had been a devout Hindu, and had for years before we saw her lived a pilgrim's life. Very simple was her faith; after her conversion she learned to read, and from morning to night the holy book was her companion. Beautiful was it to see her 'inner man' growing day by day whilst the 'outer man' with awful literality was *decaying.* For six weeks before her course was run the *worms were feeding upon her!* Truly it would have been a relief if the dogs had come and licked her sores. Such was the condition of that dying saint; yet there was no impatience, no repining; she had light and health and peace within. She calmly reposed on the love and faithfulness of the Saviour, and at length passed away rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. Happy was the moment when the holy angels carried her emancipated spirit into Abraham's bosom. Verily in her case, to depart and be with Christ was '*far better.*'

The story of the lepers is intersected by a charming little incident, which must be told. In an orphanage under our care was a Brahman boy whom we had baptised. Young as the child was—he was only nine years—he evinced, in a remarkable degree, the signs of spiritual life. But his body was weak and sickly. Consumption appeared, and we sent him to a large native hospital in the neighbourhood. He took his Bengali Testament with him. Two or three days after, we went to see

the little sufferer. He met us with eyes glistening with delight, and, pointing to a young man on a bed some distance off, said, 'Saheb, come and speak to that Mussalman; I am sure he will become a Christian.' We went to the man indicated, and found that the Christian boy had been reading to him the Scriptures and telling him the story of love. The Moslem at once declared that his interest in the subject had been awakened. 'I never heard,' said he, 'such words in my life; can you supply me with a book like that?' We engaged to do this, and accordingly sent him a copy of the New Testament.

Circumstances prevented us going again for several days. When we next went, to our surprise, we could see nothing of the Christian child. On enquiry we were deeply saddened to learn that, immediately after our last visit, he had been seized by cholera; he had died, and was already in his grave. We then made our way to the bed of the Mohammedan. We found it, too, without an occupant. We learnt that he had been discharged as incurable. The doctors, in short, knew not the nature of his disease. We went away solemnised and somewhat uneasy. 'It is well,' said we, 'with the child; but what of the Mohammedan?' Two full years passed over, and then, on paying our usual visit to the Lepers' Asylum, we observed a stranger amongst the body of converts. The moment we entered that stranger's face was lit up with a glow of delight. As we gazed upon him his features seemed not unknown to us, but we failed to recollect him. 'Saheb,' said he, 'don't you know me? don't you remember the little boy you sent to the hospital two years ago? don't you remember the Mussalman to whom he read and with whom he spake? I am that Mussalman; bless God that he brought that child to my bedside! The doctors discharged me; they knew not what was the matter with me; I now know too well, I am a poor leper, and hence I have come here; but, thank God! I have found truth and salvation; during the past two years I have been daily searching the holy book you sent me,

and thinking of what that child said to me, and, I trust, I have received the Saviour into my heart.' He was baptised in the midst of his leper brethren, who welcomed him with joy. It soon became apparent that David (this name he chose for himself) was a man of singular intelligence as well as of deep religious earnestness. The rest of the leper community gradually came to look up to him as their natural head and leader; he, in fact, became their unordained pastor and teacher. His physical condition was such that he never could leave his bed; but that bed was his *throne* and *pulpit.* He ruled with Christian wisdom and love over his less advanced brethren; he watched their walk, gently admonished any inconsistencies which they might display, gathered them around him every morning and evening for devotion; expounded to them the Scriptures and mightily helped them in their heavenward course. Hindu and Mohammedan enquirers also sat by his side and learnt the truth from his lips. He lived some three years thus to glorify God and benefit his fellows. His sufferings at times were great, but we never saw him unhappy; he seemed to have reached the Apostolic standard; he was 'joyful in all his tribulations.' We never saw a Christian with clearer views, stronger faith, and brighter hope than he possessed.

When the Master summoned him away, we all felt that the loss to the Leper Church was great. But it is an interesting fact that David has never lacked a successor; as one leader has passed away another has been found fitted to succeed; the lepers themselves have instinctively placed themselves under the best qualified of their number. Thus a degree of self-government and self-help has found a footing amongst them. This has been helpful in preserving discipline and also in self-extension. With no little comfort have we recently learnt that the little church is still growing.

It is pleasing and suggestive to note certain collateral effects of Christianity amongst these poor sufferers. Anyone

visiting the asylum could hardly fail to be struck with the air of comfort, cleanliness, and order which marks the Christian wards as contrasted with those occupied by the Hindus and Mussalmans. The visitor might be led to infer that the Christians are 'better-off' than their other leper brethren; he would also naturally suppose that the Christians were merely carrying out hints and suggestions which had been given to them. In each case he would be mistaken. The 'temporalities' of the lepers in the respective wards are exactly alike, and we never said a word as to those external matters. The feature spoken of is a natural outgrowth of Christianity, thus showing that that holy faith possesses an inherent corrective power, setting wrongs of every description right.

The visitor would observe that one end of the male Christian ward had been set apart as a little chapel. There he would see a neat reading-desk, a communion table and other becoming articles of furniture. This too was a purely native conception, and, what is still more interesting, the *execution* was also native. The Christian lepers evidently felt a need of some sort of a sanctuary. Without saying a word to us they drew out their plan, and out of their slender means paid for the furniture which their little chapel contains. The public ministrations are conducted in that portion of the ward. There from time to time the Holy Supper is administered. On such occasions the two sexes come together. We know of no sight more touchingly beautiful than such a service. Perhaps few persons could gaze upon such a scene unaffected. The poor people spread clean mats on the floor around the communion table; on these they kneel, the men on one side, the women on the other. All are attired in their very best. The responses are distinctly and devoutly made; now and then you may see a sightless eye lifted up to heaven, and perhaps a big tear rolling down the cheek; we have seen that again and again. We and other *clean* recipients having first partaken, we went round and

administered to the kneeling group. In the case of those who had lost the greater part of their hands it was needful to place the sacred elements in their mouths. Those who had hands with unsightly sores on them, with a delicacy of regard for our feelings which was touching to witness, most carefully covered the receiving hand with a portion of their dress. Never, methinks, has the matchless 'Gloria in excelsis' sounded in our ears so sweet and so divine as when, at the close of such a service, it resounded in full chorus from the lips of those leper communicants. At such times we have felt most truly that He who in the days of His flesh showed such tender compassion to sufferers of this class was doubtless present in our midst.[1]

Reverting once more to the *larger* Church, we are bound to mention what we consider to be at once a sign and a cause of weakness. The native Christian community has many of the passive and active graces which our holy religion inspires; very many of their members walk worthy of their high vocation, and, in their individual capacity, labour to extend the Redeemer's kingdom; but the weak point we indicate is that of *dependence* —dependence on foreign support. Modern missions, in founding churches, have hardly followed the Apostolic rule. We know what that rule was; the missionary had no great society with ample funds at his back, he represented no influential organisation; he went forth simply in the name of his Master; he took his life in his hand and little or nothing in his pocket; he

[1] Not long after the late Viceroy, Lord Northbrook, arrived in India, he paid a visit to the asylum. His lordship, on returning to Government House, gave an order for bunches of flowers to be daily sent from his gardens to the lepers. This little act of kindliness was quite in keeping with the Viceroy's genial nature, and it is not easy to say how much delight the bright flowers from such a donor afforded to the poor sufferers. We have seen them with sparkling eyes point to their bouquet and say, with a look of thankful pride, 'The Lord Saheb has sent it!'

Exceedingly do we rejoice to learn that for some years back at Bombay, Ambala, Sabathu, and elsewhere, several of our missionary brethren are caring for the lepers. A goodly number of converts has already rewarded their efforts; may their good work be still more abundantly blest!

brought with him the Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel: besides 'the means of grace,' he could present no other means of help to his converts; he could neither found schools nor appoint paid agents of any kind; he could not settle down as a pastor to those whom he had baptised, the terms of his commission obliged him to push on to 'the regions beyond.' Accordingly, from the very first, self-support and self-government became the law of the infant Church. One or more elders were appointed; the Church added other officials as it saw fit; it paid its own way and managed its own concerns, aided by an occasional visit or written instructions from its founder.

Our modern policy has been, to a great extent, an inversion of that order. In the majority of cases, the missionary, after gathering a little flock of converts, found himself, as a matter of course, their pastor, and not their pastor only, but their ruler, judge, teacher, doctor,—their all-in-all. The primitive missionaries obtained support from their converts, modern converts have too often looked for support from their missionaries; their agents of every description have had to be paid by mission money. It is hardly in human nature for people to insist upon giving, thinking, caring, working for themselves when anybody else with alacrity and delight is prepared to do all that for them. Native Christians cannot see, any more than other Christians, why they should prefer a bed of thorns when liberal and loving hands have provided for them a bed of roses. They accept the *inevitable*, and, the misfortune is, they come to think it *is* inevitable, and too often, when the thing is once established, the *missionary also* accepts it as inevitable; he never knew the native Christians help themselves, and so he, perhaps, concludes they are *made to be helped*, and that his great work is to help them. He becomes a very great man (Burra Saheb), and essential (so it is thought) to the existence of the Church; but, in proportion to the growth of his importance is the growing insignificance of those who so implicitly rely upon him. The danger

with him is, to trust himself a little too much and to trust his people too little; the danger with them is, to trust him entirely and themselves not at all. Like overgrown babes, they cling to his knees, and, like a timid parent, he fears to cut the leading-strings.

It requires but little discernment to see in all this a pernicious and enfeebling policy; under such influences native Christianity may be genuine, but it can never be *strong*; it may *seem* to be fat and flourishing, like a native fed on sweetmeats and ghee, but it must lack muscle and backbone. Nine-tenths of the evils which missionaries deplore in the native Church, and almost the whole of the anxieties which distress both them and their societies, may be traced to this mistaken policy.

We may safely call it a mistaken policy; but it is neither our province or desire to censure anyone. In our view, the policy itself was natural and inevitable. Had the modern missionary been circumstanced as were the primitive missionaries, stern necessity would have compelled him, in some degree, to have done as they did; and the same stern necessity would have evolved among the Indian converts features of strength analogous to those which appeared among the early Christians. But the missionary found his circumstances made for him, and they were not at all Apostolic in their character. He could not disguise the fact that in his person he represented the rulers of the land, 'the powers that be.' He could not but plead 'guilty' to the charge that he was a paid agent of a foreign society with special funds for evangelising purposes. His converts naturally recognised and exaggerated the importance of both these facts.[1] The converts, on their part, did not expect, nor

[1] It is a curious circumstance that the mass of the natives, notwithstanding the zealous endeavours of the Government to convince them of its *neutrality*—of its complete official indifference to the subject of religion—insist upon believing that the Government is one with the missionaries in seeking the propagation of Christianity; so simple are they that they cannot grasp the '*profound distinction* between a *personal* and *official* conscience!

did the missionary, on his part, attempt, the establishment of the Apostolic rule.

It must not be forgotten, moreover, that in another respect the circumstances were *against* the modern missionary. The Apostles, amongst their early converts found, perhaps, everywhere, Jews or proselytes well instructed in the Old Testament, who, after they had embraced Christ, were speedily qualified for ordination. In the case of converted Hindus it is otherwise. No previous training has prepared any of them for the discharge of spiritual functions among their brethren. The missionary has to begin at the very beginning, and impart the simplest rudiments of Scriptural knowledge. In the meantime he *must* be a pastor to the flock, whilst a native pastorate and self-support, in his eyes, loom in the distant future.

The inauguration of the present system is thus easily accounted for: would that it could be so easily remedied! but remedied it *must* be, and that at any cost, if the native Church is to put forth its strength and Christianity become indigenous.

First of all, we should learn a practical lesson for the future. It is a thousandfold more difficult to eradicate an old evil of this kind than prevent its origin. In founding new missions, we should go on a sound and healthy principle from the first. We should do nothing for the converts which they could possibly do for themselves; we should be content with a less perfect organisation, less complete appliances, if only more of native effort can be developed. Happily, as we have before stated, it is not necessary to inaugurate the principle of supporting religious institutions and paying religious agents; this principle has for ages been in active exercise in India. All we have to do is to *perpetuate* it. It is suicidal to ignore it or to *burke* it by a more *liberal* policy, falsely so called. It may, without doubt, be averred that, if the native Christians continued to give, as converts, what they used to contribute as Hindus or Mohammedans, the Church, with all its institutions and native officials, would

be amply supported. We wrong the native Christians if we assume they would *not* give as they have been wont to give. *They would if we had required them to do it.* Many of them would have recognised the obligation to give *more* as Christians than they had given before. As regards the mass of the existing converts, we have to educate them *backwards* in this respect; we have to help them to un-learn to receive, and to re-learn to give.

This is a difficult and a trying process, and is necessarily a *slow* one. Precipitation may do immense harm. It is not possible by an order of a committee or a stroke of a pen to remedy an evil of this nature. Hastily to abolish the privileges which the people have come to regard as a right is sure to irritate and prejudice them; suddenly to withdraw the European pastors before the congregations are prepared for the transition to native control, may give rise to worse evils than it is designed to cure. We could support what we are saying by undoubted facts.

In one sense, the operation is a *surgical* one—old evils must be cut off, but *one by one*, giving the patient good breathing-time between each cut. Above all is it necessary to form a *public opinion* against the old system of dependence. If the missionary lay hold of the more sensible and advanced members of his flock, if he never lose an opportunity of impressing upon them his views, if he show them, from time to time, the positive wrong, the meanness, the unscripturalness, the evil effects of the old system, he will assuredly find that the best of them will come to see as he sees and feel as he feels; they will come to be ashamed of the old state of things, and to oppose it on principle. Such a sound nucleus, however small, is sure to grow; from this centre new views will radiate to the outer circle of the community; gradually a wholesome public opinion will grow up; the people will come to see that the thing is indefensible; when they cease to defend it, its doom is fixed; a residuum may

to the last wish to retain the old system, but the flower of the flock will aid the missionary in abolishing it; the more he uses *their hand* in the process of abolition, the stronger his position and the sounder the reform will be. If, together with the abolition policy, he, step by step, train them to devise liberal things, to give as God hath prospered them out of their monthly income, also to give 'thank-offerings' for special mercies, he will do well; he need not mind how *small* the beginning is; he thus inserts the 'thin end of the wedge,' a *principle of giving* is engendered, and, with judicious management, it is sure to grow. If, whilst he is training them to give, he also steadily train them to *work*, throwing upon their consciences a share of his own responsibility, placing trustfully in their hands some of the duties which he alone used to discharge, taking them into his counsel in all things relating to the well-being of the Church and mission, he will be astonished to see how much more there was in them than he gave them credit for. It is true all the world over, and above all in an infant mission Church, that *to trust people is to elevate and strengthen them*; to distrust them is to degrade and weaken them. As we think of the undeveloped latent good of the native Christian community, the poet's lines strike us as only too apt a picture of the case:—

> Full many a gem of purest ray serene
> The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
> Full many a flower that's born to blush unseen
> And waste its fragrance on the desert air.

Let us but trust our people more, and we may rejoicingly discover that the feeblest of our congregations contains some 'village Hampden' fitted to raise his fellows, or some 'burning and shining light' qualified to illumine and quicken them.

We have dwelt thus long on the policy of a *reform in the congregation*, but have said nothing of a *native pastorate*. Our reason is this, the *former must precede the latter*. It is im-

possible too strongly to insist upon this point. Until a congregation has, in some degree, been trained to self-support and self-help, it is, perhaps, *worse than useless* to displace the European by a native pastor. Unless the congregation be so far advanced that, from the first, they will, in part at least, support their native pastor, he ought by no means to be appointed. If it be bad for them to be ministered to by a European paid by foreign money, it is doubly bad for them to have a native pastor entirely supported from the same source. The thing is tolerable in the case of the European missionary: it is intolerable and non-natural in the case of the native pastor; the European rule is understood to be provisional and temporary —the native rule is to be the normal state of things. If we begin with paying the salary of the native pastor, we establish a pernicious precedent, and defer, instead of hastening, the era of healthy independence and self-support.

It must not be supposed that nothing has been done already towards the dawn of that desired era. Thank God! *much* has been done. A fair number of congregations have now their own pastors, supported entirely by themselves, whilst they in various ways are helping on the great work of evangelising the heathen around. Very many more congregations have native pastors, supported in part by themselves, in part from mission funds. In this case the principle is safe and sound, for it is understood that the native contributions for pastoral support are gradually to increase, until the European subsidy is ultimately surrendered. Then, again, there are numbers of congregations in which, though a European is the pastor, the preparatory training for self-support is in full and successful operation. To the credit of our native Christians be it testified that, when properly appealed to, they respond with hopeful zeal and liberality to the appeal. Our own individual experience bears out this remark; but we prefer to ground it upon *general results*; and the returns show that native Christian contributions are

increasing at a rate of considerably more than *two hundred per cent.* every ten years.

Upon the whole, we are encouraged to believe that the day is approaching when the native Church in India, supported by its own funds, ministered to by its own sons, and governed by its own laws, will shine forth 'fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners,'—when the converted children of India will, as its apostles and evangelists, carry the glad tidings to every corner of the land, and so win it to the dominion of Him whose right it is.[1]

[1] To prophesy is not our province; yet it is impossible not to ask what the future constitution of the Church in India may possibly be. Judging from the feelings and tendencies of the educated native Christians in Bengal, it seems not at all likely that the denominational distinctions of Christian Europe will be perpetuated. Who would wish to perpetuate them? The leading members of the native Christian community, though at present connected with missions representing those distinctions, attach little importance to them; they look rather to the grand fundamental truths of Christianity than to the superficial peculiarities on which differing bodies of Christians insist. The native Christians we speak of say to each other, 'We have enough in common to enable us to found a common Church; let us then hope for the day when all the scattered congregations shall be included in one grand and glorious fold—the *national Church of India.*' Already are they feeling after this consummation. And if, as the outcome of our varied missionary operations, a Church of India, sound in doctrine and catholic and apostolic in spirit and discipline, should be realised, shall we not say with unselfish delight—'To God be all the glory'?

CHAPTER XI.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER.

'Lord what wilt thou have me to do?'—Acts ix. 6.

'But what are they among so many?' Much as we may rejoice in the fact that India contains more than three hundred thousand native Christians, the heart is oppressed and saddened by the reflection that these represent little more than *one thousandth part* of the whole population of the country! Is not this a case in which the little light makes the prevailing darkness all the more visible? There are yet hundreds of towns and villages untrodden at any period by the feet of those who publish peace and bring glad tidings of good; there are tens of millions in whose ears have never yet been sounded that Name which is above every name; every year are there myriads passing into eternity who may well exclaim as their dying lament, 'No man careth for our souls!' The cries of dark, anxious, doubting, burdened souls are going up from the plains of Hindustan into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth for help. He hears the cry, and He has anticipated it by giving India to us, and by placing the means of her help and healing in our hands. He looks down from His eternal throne to see how we discharge our awful and weighty trust. For thirty centuries past has that cry been going up from multitudes who were groping their way amid the circling gloom, dimly 'feeling after God if haply they might find Him.' Why He suffered so many ages to elapse, so many schools of thought and systems of religion to rise and run their course ere the 'true light' appeared on

India's horizon, it is not for us to say: how He will deal—*has* dealt—with the hundred generations which, before He entrusted India to us, passed to His righteous bar, we know not. It is not for man to judge his Maker; it is not for man to propound a theory where God has not spoken; it is for us, in the retrospect of the mysterious past, meekly to avow our ignorance, humbly to restrain our speculations, and with cheerful confidence cry, 'Shall not the Judge of all the world do right?'

But, when from the past we turn to the *present*, we come at once into a new atmosphere; here we can breathe freely, the painful gloom has passed away, the era of doubt and speculation has given place to the era of plain, clear, and undoubted *duty*; we have no longer to strive to pierce the murky mists overhead in order to read the face of heaven; the face of heaven, in all its cloudless beauty, shines forth to our view; whilst, in flaming characters, a divine inscription meets our gaze, 'Freely ye have received, freely give!' Who will deny that we have received, most freely, most bountifully, what countless multitudes in India have been yearning for, but have *not* received?

Can we misread the teachings of God in this history; shall we with arrogant conceit exclaim, 'Our own hand hath gotten us the victory'? How many European nations have bidden for the prize which fell to our lot? Portugal, France, Holland, Denmark: each of these Powers has coveted the possession which has come to our hands; He who sits above the circles of the earth, distributing the nations to whomsoever He will, has said, 'Not to you, but *to Britain* I commit this charge!' Thus India is ours; a country fifteen times the size of our own, with a population ten times as numerous as that which peoples the British Isles!

For more than a century have we held this fief in trust from the King of kings. Can we look back upon the past, the policy of our rulers, the selfishness of our nation, and the supineness of the Church of Christ, without sorrow and shame? Must we

not with confusion of face admit, 'Verily we are guilty concerning our brother!' India had a right to expect from us better things, and for better things than these was India entrusted to us. May God in his mercy forgive the past and give more grace for the time to come! Mutual recrimination does not become us. If, in the retrospect of dark days gone by, the *Secular Powers* must acknowledge 'We have done the things which we ought not to have done!' the *Church* must confess with reference to brighter days, 'We have left undone the things which we ought to have done.' If, before 1813, the guilt of closing the 'door of utterance' lay with the ruling powers, the guilt of not duly entering in at the *open door* must rest with the Church since that memorable year.[1] Would that the time past might suffice us to have wrought folly on the one hand, and to have slumbered on the other! Would that, as a nation and a Church, we might awake to a sense of our responsibilities and to an united and harmonious effort to discharge them!

We cannot do better than sum up our story with the telling utterances of the last three of India's metropolitans. We have known and loved and honoured them all; no three men, perhaps, could differ more widely in temperament, in general tone, and in ecclesiastical views than did they, but, in one respect, they were *one*—each burned with desire to bless the natives of India with 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' Lovely and pleasant were they in their lives, and in their deaths they were not long divided. In sixteen short years the three have passed away. They now see 'Eye to eye'; and in the clearer light of eternity, whatever modification in their views may have taken place, assuredly in their common devotion to the spread of the truth among the heathen there has been none.[2]

[1] The renewal of the East India Company's charter in 1813 threw open the country to missionary enterprise.

[2] With scarcely an exception, the Bishops of India have been characterised by

The following burning words occur in a charge delivered by Bishop Wilson :—'What can exceed the inviting prospects which India presents? The fields white for the harvest and awaiting the hand of the reaper! nations bursting the intellectual sleep of thirty centuries! superstitions no longer in the giant strength of youth, but doting to their fall. Britain placed at the head of the most extensive empire ever consigned to a Western sceptre . . . Oh, where are the first propagators and professors of Christianity? Where are our martyrs and reformers? Where are the ingenuous, devoted, pious sons of our universities? Where are our younger devoted clergy? Are they studying their ease? Are they resolved on a ministry tame, ordinary, agreeable to the flesh? Are they drivelling after minute literature, poetry, fame? Do they shrink from that toil and labour which, as Augustine says, our Commander, *Noster Imperator*, accounts most blessed?'

Already, in a previous chapter, have we given a few sentences from the last charge delivered by Bishop Cotton; we here furnish *in extenso* the passage from which those sentences were taken. That calm, scholarly, and holy prelate says :—'When every other English influence of this nineteenth century is brought to bear on the educated natives of Bengal, it will be a shame and scandal to the Church, if the highest and purest of all is wanting. They adopt our manners, they share our education, they obtain the title of Bachelor of Arts by a course of study, which, in extent, is actually greater than is required for a degree without honours at Oxford or Cambridge, they enter our learned and scientific professions, they even press into our

missionary zeal and by love for the people of the land. Bishop Heber delighted in calling himself, 'the chief missionary in India.' Speaking of the people he says, 'They are a nation, with whom, whatever are their faults, I for one, should think it impossible to live long among without loving them—a race of gentle and temperate habits, with a natural talent and acuteness beyond the ordinary level of mankind, and with a thirst for general knowledge which even the renowned and inquisitive Athenians can hardly have surpassed or equalled.'

civil service, they not only may, but actually do, occupy seats in our councils and on our highest bench of justice, so that in everything except Christianity they are fast becoming European. We do not under-value these means of enlightenment. Doubtless the tree of knowledge round which they eagerly gather bears bitter as well as wholesome fruit: there is much, alas! in modern literature to lower rather than to elevate their standard of morality, much to lead the inquirer away from Christ rather than to bring him, as a humble penitent, to the footstool of His grace. Still, viewing their present condition as a whole, we see that it is in accordance with the laws by which God's Providence has guided other nations; our Bengali fellow-subjects are walking in the path by which men of the Western world have walked before them; civilisation, refinement, learning, political activity, material improvement, law and order, above all the sight of Government conducted with scrupulous integrity, and with a most real and conscientious intention to promote the welfare of the governed, are, I fully believe, the appointed preparations for the Gospel; messengers to go before the face of the Lord and to prepare His way, to sweep away from India's past all that is vile and polluting, and to absorb into a happier and holier future whatever remains of beauty and greatness. But that the people of India may realise this vision of coming glory, by the humble and adoring recognition of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, the merely negative and destructive period through which they are passing must be brought to an end. . . . Upon such a condition of society, my brethren, the Church of Christ should bring to bear all its hallowing influences just as in the days of Origen and Clement its power was felt in the centre of Greek civilisation at Alexandria. It should be our aim to purify the whole moral and social atmosphere by faith in the Redeemer, and to surround the educated classes of India with a power of Christian evidence, Christian example, and Christian influence,

which at last, we cannot doubt, will be "mighty through God to the casting down of strongholds."'

The last Metropolitan of India, Bishop Milman, has but recently fallen asleep. This devout and earnest man yearned with all the intensity of fervent desire for India's regeneration; his latest official acts were in connection with the missions of the Church Missionary Society. The Rev. W. Hooper, officiating principal of the Lahore Divinity College, thus describes the last visit of the bishop to that institution:—'The college was visited by the Bishop of Calcutta, who preached a touching sermon to the students from I Thess. ii. 7, 8, on the *tenderness* which is required in work for God; and afterwards expressed himself greatly pleased with his visit, and bade us God speed. He went over the garden, and shook hands and spoke a word with each of the students.'

After this visit the Bishop pushed on to other mission stations, and, even when the hand of death was upon him, insisted upon conducting mission services for which he had been announced, but for which he had no strength left. The following extract is well worth preserving as a record of the last week's work of the dying prelate:—'He arrived there (at Peshawar) on the 22nd February last. On the 25th, he confirmed thirteen native Christians, delivered two Hindustani addresses in the mission church, visited the native cemetery, was present at the bazaar-preaching of the missionaries, and attended evening service in the mission church. On Sunday, the 27th, he administered the Holy Communion at the mission church, and in the evening, notwithstanding that his illness was now gaining upon him, he preached on behalf of the Church Missionary Society at the station church, which was filled with troops and civil and military officers, and spoke with great earnestness, alluding to the many missionaries who had died at Peshawar. Next day he attended the distribution of prizes at the mission school, and delivered an address in Hindustani, though suffering greatly from bodily

weakness. All that week he was very ill; and on the following Sunday, at his request, our missionaries, Mr. Hughes and Mr. Jukes, received the Communion with him at the hands of his chaplain. On March 15th, he died at Rawul Pindi, whither he had been removed, and next morning his body was committed to the grave, the service being read by his chaplain, the chaplain of the station, and Mr. Hughes.' 'There is not the least doubt,' writes Mr. Hughes, 'that he died in the service of the Church Missionary Society. He was essentially a missionary bishop. Nothing in mission work was too small or insignificant for him to seek to encourage. He had a word and a shake of the hand for every Christian.'

Perhaps few persons who were familiar with the bluff and rugged face, and the blunt, masculine bearing of the late bishop, would say that *tenderness* strongly marked him; yet, it *did*; beneath the *brusque* exterior there was a hidden power of deep and genuine sympathy. We say what we know, for our last communication from himself showed full well that he knew how to 'weep with them that weep,' and how to comfort those whom God had chastened. His letter, full of tender consolation, lies before us. True to himself, he could not conclude that epistle without a reference to India's wants; *his* concluding sentence shall be *ours*, and, O! gracious God, do Thou grant that his words may so strike the heart of many a reader, that the response may clearly show that, 'he being dead yet speaketh!' The Bishop's last words are—'The cry for Men, Men, Men, seems as strong and agonising as ever. I trust it may meet a response in God's good time. Yours affectionately in Christ, R. Calcutta.'

APPENDIX.

No apology can be needed for reproducing in the form of an appendix the following solemn, earnest and affectionate address from three Bishops of India. The Pastoral speaks directly to the *Church in India*, but few readers will deny that its appeals have also a special bearing on the *Church at home*. It is a solemnising thought, and may add weight to these fervid counsels, to reflect that, though little more than two years have elapsed since the Pastoral was issued, *only one of the Bishops who signed it now survives!*

'PASTORAL.

'*To the Clergy and Laity of the three dioceses of India.*

'The 16th March 1874.

'DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN IN CHRIST JESUS.

'*Grace be to you and peace from* GOD OUR FATHER *and* OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Conference.

'WHEN we took counsel together, in our late Conference at Nagpore, by what further efforts the Church of Christ in this land might be edified and enlarged, we resolved not only to appeal to the Church at home for the continuance and increase of her sympathy and help, and chiefly for the gift of some of the ablest and most devout among her sons and daughters to come over and help us; but also to address unitedly all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has here made us overseers, and beseech them one and all to take that holy interest in the work, which its vastness, its importance, and the glory of the Saviour Who gave His life for its accomplishment, demand.

'2. The interest in the Mission work of our Church, which we trust in answer to prayer, public and private, has been developed in England, appears to require a true and devout echo in this country. The evangelisation of the 240 millions of India, and the due provision for the spiritual edification of the Church and for her complete organisation on a sound and apostolic basis, have been for many years past, and are at this time especially, drawing the attention and moving the sympathy of earnest and faithful men, both clergy and laity, at home. We desire that you also, Christian brethren, should consider well the importance of these objects, should admit them into your deepest and holiest sympathies, and should strive by sacrifices, by active exertions, by example, to promote their realisation.

Zeal for Missions in England waits for echo in India.

'3. For the thought of converting India to Christ and edifying all her inhabitants with the ministrations of His Church is no invention of men, but is the promise alike and the command of Him to whom the Father gives 'all the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession.' India herself has not desired the unspeakable blessing, although she so deeply needs it. Not many of her children ask for our religious light. Multitudes hate it, not a few are wont to say—"Let us alone: if you worship the Creator, so do we: our religion is different from yours, but our God is the same: Hinduism for the Hindus, Christianity for the Christians: we shall reach the same goal at last;" but ye have not so learned Christ, who bade His disciples, "Go and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Ye servants and soldiers of the Cross, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who came into the world, and gave His life for the world, that the world through Him might be saved. Be fellow-workers with God, who willeth that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth.

Origin of the desire to Evangelise India.

'4. The evangelisation of India has been begun, her light is come, her sun has arisen, and here and there her inhabitants have opened their shutters and received the heavenly rays. Through the teaching of missionaries, the spirit of life has revealed to some the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The present number of the baptised in connection with our own Church is nearly 120,000. But what are these in comparison with the whole number of souls in India? They form

but a two-thousandth part. Add the results of the labours of other Christian denominations, and the number will be found to be about one in every thousand. Add all the Roman Catholic and the Syrian Christians, and the Christendom of Hindustan does not amount to so much as one in every hundred of the population. If, further, you examine the spots where our missionaries have been most blessed with success, as Tinnevelly, the number of their baptised is not more than one in every thirty.

'5. We are thankful for what God has already wrought; for those thousands who now acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ; for the number amongst them, men and women, who have shown evidences of unfeigned piety; for the 120 who have been counted worthy to be admitted into the ministry of our Church; for the rejection of Hindoo idolatries by many who have not confessed Christ; for the earnest enquirings after true religion which are found in some; for the inroads, however slight, which have been made upon caste, that great hinderer of the Gospel of light and love; for the removal of many evils in the land through the introduction of Christian influences and law. But notwithstanding all this, we cannot shut our eyes to the great facts, that not one large temple in all India has yet been deserted by its idolatrous worshippers; extremely few among the higher castes have yet come over to Christ; a very large majority are strongly opposed to the progress of the Gospel; the benefits of Christianity have reached a still smaller number of women than of men; a conversion in a family is regarded with the greatest horror, and occasions the intensest regret and grief; the surface only of Indian life and the least esteemed of the people have been touched with the power of the Gospel; the mass is still heathen, by custom, by self-interest, by mutual fear, by caste, held fast together in heathenism. The Mohammedans, who form about a tenth part of the population, have hitherto yielded to the influences of the Gospel even less than their neighbours.

How much not yet attained.

'6. Yet India must be brought to Christ, and Christ must be honoured and worshipped in every city and village. And upon whom does the duty of winning India for Christ so justly and so imperatively devolve, as upon those members of the Church of Christ who dwell upon her soil, who see her sad idolatries, who daily witness her degradation, and have daily intercourse with her children, for whose

Upon whom especially rests the duty of bringing India to Christ.

immortal souls no less than for our own the Redeemer shed His blood? What branch of all the Church of Christ throughout the world is so manifestly entrusted with that duty as ours, to whose nation and sovereign God has given India for a dependency? Did He give it that we might be enriched and our ambition be gratified? Or did He rather give it that we might convey to every home in Hindustan the knowledge of life and immortality through Jesus Christ? He gave it to us indeed that after so many centuries of idolatries and cruelties and ignorance, India too, through our Christian charity, might be redeemed from her iniquities; that her temples with all their degrading rites might be exchanged for houses of prayer and holy worship acceptable to God through Jesus Christ; that her oppressed, her mourners, her heavy-laden might hear of the acceptable year of the Lord, of His balm-piercing wound, of His everlasting rest; that her children might learn the Saviour's name; that her men might have power to overcome the wicked one; that all might confess that Jesus Christ is the son of God, the Lord of all. This weighty responsibility rests upon us. We must all, both individually and unitedly, strive to discharge it to the utmost of our power.

Ways of helping the work.

'7. What then can you do that you may promote while you have the opportunity (a brief one only, and one for which you will have to give an account) this divine and so exceedingly important work? The first duty of all is this, to manifest in your lives the divine power of faith, and evince continually, both as individuals and as members of the Church of Christ, that God is in you of a truth. While there is much to encourage us in the life, charity, and sympathy of many of all ranks and conditions among us, it is manifest that such a standard as the Word of God proposes has not been attained or approached. Nevertheless, we are convinced that we shall not appeal in vain to the consciences and the charities of our brethren, when we beseech you to show forth now, by the holiness of your lives, a deeper interest in the mission work of the Church. You ought by frequent communion with Christ to receive His Spirit, and the impress of His holy character, and so to live in His light, that, like objects on which the unclouded sun is shining, you shall yourselves be full of light, and dispel the darkness around. We beseech then every member of Christ, first of all, to be a Missionary by his life.

Personal piety.

'8. We ask you next to take a vivid interest in the special Mission work (if there be any) in your neighbourhood, enquiring about its welfare, and encouraging its agents.

Take interest in neighbouring Missions.

'9. We further implore you to strengthen and support those societies which labour side by side in this great work, especially the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Church Missionary Society, and that for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which was in fact the earliest Missionary society for India, and which maintains and evinces its continued interest in its ancient work of love by manifold and wise contributions to the support and development of Christian enterprise carried on more directly by the other Societies which have been mentioned. We ask you to subscribe regularly and not grudgingly, set apart beforehand, deliberately and conscientiously, a portion of your income for the Lord's work.

Give subscriptions.

'10. We beseech you to keep alive your interest in the work by taking in and reading the reports of the Societies, and some one or more of their periodical publications. There is always in them matter which concerns the progress of the kingdom of God, and will interest those who pray from their hearts that that kingdom may come.

Gather information.

'11. Again, wherever you go, let the subject of Missions not be forgotten. Enquire in the neighbourhood concerning it, and show your sympathy with it.

Show sympathy.

'12. We further remind all Christian masters and mistresses of their duty as Christians towards their servants. The debt of love towards all men, under which Christ's love has placed us, is due in a special and practical form to those whom we employ in our service. Take care that they hear from time to time in their own language what Christ has done for their souls. Pray for them, and suffer not their children's souls to be neglected; but see that these also learn in their childhood those things which can make them wise unto salvation.

Care of servants.

'13. And now in order that your interest in the growth of the kingdom of God may be maintained and increased more and more, and that a like interest may be awakened in many more hearts, and that prayer may be offered for Missions more continually, and the Holy Spirit be poured out more abundantly in answer thereto, and Christians themselves become

Set apart seasons for special prayer, &c.

more like living sermons, and the Gospel achieve nobler and more rapid conquests, we recommend that at two seasons in every year the subject of Missions be brought more prominently forward in our public services, and the divine aid and blessing be specially invoked upon them.

'14. We think the seasons of Epiphany and Whitsuntide eminently suitable for this purpose; and we recommend that in all the Churches throughout India, on the first Sunday after the Epiphany (or, if the Festival fall on a Sunday, then on that day itself) and on Whitsunday, the congregations be invited to earnest prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, and particularly for the enlargement of Christ's Church in India, and that every soldier of the Cross be affectionately reminded by the preacher of his solemn duty not to cease from intercessions and efforts and gifts, until every barrier against the progress of the Gospel is removed, and all the tribes of India with every nation of the world have been enlightened with the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and brought into the everlasting covenant of His grace.

Epiphany and Whitsuntide suitable.

'15. We also recommend that the setting apart of one whole week at each of those seasons for special services, more or less frequent as local circumstances may admit, and special intercession in daily private, family and public prayer, that the kind purposes of God towards all the nations of the world may have their fulfilment speedily.

Special week.

'16. Our conviction of the exceeding importance of the work, and of the comparatively small progress which has hitherto been made in turning the heart of India to Christ, has prompted us to propose the devotion of so much time and effort to exhortation and prayer on the subject.

'17. We finally exhort and pray you, by all the mercies of God and all the love of Christ, to accept these our earnest entreaties and to join heart and soul with the Church at home, deep answering to deep, in advancing the kingdom of grace, in striving to diminish the sin that is in the world by demonstrating that the Gospel has power to mitigate earth's sorrows by its heavenly consolations, to offer the Gentile world to God, to hasten the day of the Saviour's return when His people shall see Him and be like Him, and to fill the whole earth with the Glory of the Lord.

'Commending you to God and the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus!

'We are
'DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,
'Your faithful servants in the Lord,

'R. CALCUTTA,
'F. MADRAS,
'H. A. BOMBAY.'

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